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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the dramatic increase in the scope, intensity and frequency of censorship protests in the United States, and based on the premise that the censorship crusade is better organized, staffed, and financed than ever before, this journal issue addresses many facets of the censorship problem. In addition to an introduction by Ronald Salomone, the following articles are included: (1) "Keep the Clocks from Striking Thirteen by Speaking Out Against Censorship in 1984 and Beyond" (James E. Davis); (2) "Guidelines, Censorship, and the Basie Band--A Personal View" (Charles Suhor); (3) "The Cycle of Censorship" (Robert Small); (4) "Censorship and the Monster Within" (Leroy Perkins); (5) "A Few Books and Articles about Censorship" (Ken Donelson); (6) "Tell City Rejects the Secular Humanism Charge" (Edward B. Jenkinson); (7) "Monello, Wisconsin--A Case Study in Censorship" (Lee Burress); (8) "A Hot Potato: Information on Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Public Schools" (Helen Horn); (9) "Censorship: A Delicate Balance between School and Community" (anonymous); (10) "Academic Freedom: A Casualty of Extremism?" (Scott Nusbaum); (11) "Censorship--Be Prepared" (Leni Cook); (12) "Writing Rationales: Why and How?" (Lois Spencer); (13) "A Format for Rationale Writing" (Judith Keck); (14) "Rationale for 'Chernowitz!'" (Judith Keck); (15) "Statement of Censorship and Professional Guidelines" (National Council of Teachers of English); (16) "An Enemy of Censorship: People for the American Way" (Terry S. Haywood); (17) "The Silent Censor" (T. J. Ray); (18) "Reflections on Teaching English: An Interview with Martha Cottrill" (Sharon Patrick); (19) "The Cumulative Sentence: A Better Way" (R. E. Stratton). (JD)

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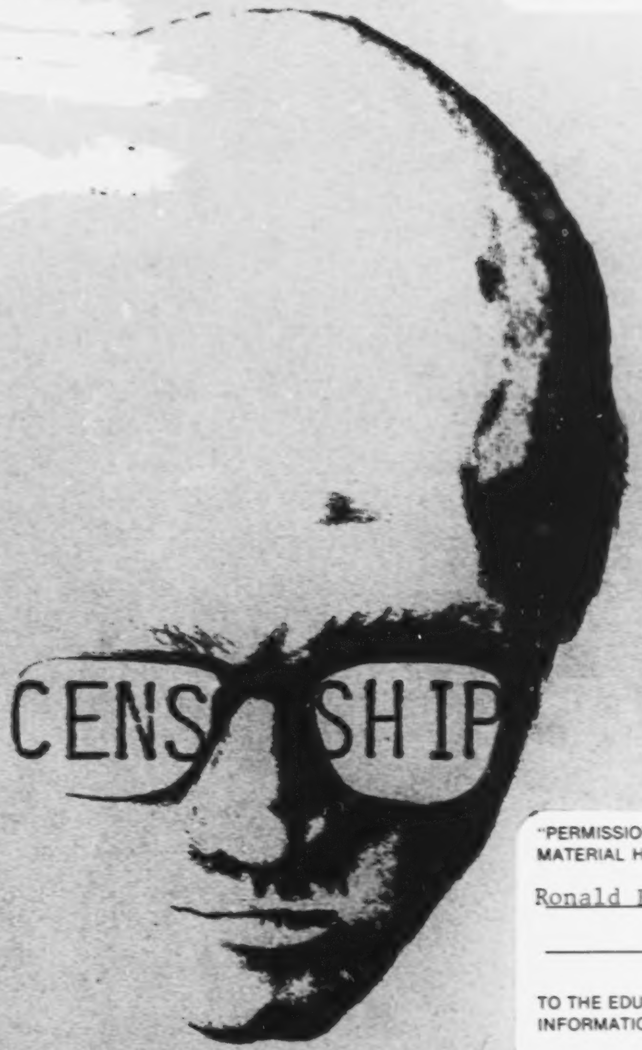

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Volume XI FALL 1984 Number 1

CENSORSHIP'S NEW WAVE

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INTRODUCTION: Censorship's New Wave

by
Ronald E. Salomone

Last spring when we began to explore the desirability of devoting another whole issue of FOCUS to the theme of censorship, I was somewhat ambivalent. Like most people in graduate schools or teaching jobs during the late 60s and mid 70s, I was vaguely aware of what was being written and said about the subject. I remember chuckling about a Mark Twain Junior High somewhere banning Huckleberry Finn and hearing strange stories about Kanawha County, West Virginia, but I had never been affected personally and didn't know anyone who had. It had been, I recalled, eight years since FOCUS (Fall 1976) had addressed the problem. Still, my impression was that censorship was an issue of the 70s, that most interest in it had died down, that it simply lacked the sense of urgency and relevance it had once possessed.

When I began to look at the problem, though, I was both surprised and alarmed. Almost daily, I came across news items of one sort or another dealing with censorship. On September 5, the governor of Ohio expressed his concern about attempted book bannings and declared "Freedom to Learn Week." Two days later I heard a radio newscast in which a church group protested the name of a junior high athletic team: the "Red Devils." On September 11, a Cincinnati paper announced that faculty at an Ohio university would take turns reading aloud selected passages from banned books: For Whom the Bell Tolls, Tom Sawyer, Lord of the Flies, and Mother Goose's Nursery Rhymes. Just before I left to spend Thanksgiving with my family (near Peoria, Illinois), I read that a school committee, supported by the Peoria school superintendent, banned three of Judy Blume's novels. And I got home just in time to read letters to the editor of a Peoria newspaper praising the committee members and the superintendent for having the courage to "speak up."

As a final straw, on the very morning that I began to arrange notes for this introduction, I received a mimeographed letter. It was from Phyllis Schlafly and began "Dear Friend." She wanted to share with me information that "you won't read anywhere else because it's been suppressed by the media." Warmed by such concern, I continued to read. I learned, for instance, that she had first hand evidence that school children were being encouraged to engage in premarital sex, to have abortions, to experiment with illegal drugs, to participate in occult practices, and to commit suicide--all, it seems, because we no longer teach "basic skills." Finally, on page 4 of the letter I reached the inevitable "bottom line." Through her Eagle Forum Ms. Schlafly stood willing to spearhead the battle against all these evils if I would be willing to assist with "the essential funds," and she closed with "Our school children cry out for your help."

I offer this information to make two fairly simple points. First, the rhetoric of the censors is not reasoned and calm but inflammatory and aimed at concerned parents and citizens. Secular humanism, anti-family, anti-God, and anti-American charges abound. Second, the censorship efforts of the 70s were no passing matter. Right now, all around us, there is a dramatic increase in the scope, intensity, and frequency of censorship protests. The number of people, the amount of money, and the network of support groups committed to such attacks all grow more impressive and powerful with each censorship episode. Quite simply, the whole censorship crusade is better organized, staffed, and financed than ever before.

The articles in this issue of FOCUS, arranged in four major sections, examine many facets of the censorship problem. In the first section I include the most general observations on the scope and climate of censorship, articles by Davis, Small, Suhor, and Perkins. I conclude this section with Donelson's bibliography. The second section focuses on specific instances of censorship episodes--Jenkinson (Indiana), Burress (Wisconsin), and Horn (Ohio)--and concludes with an essay by a friend who happens to be an attorney. I asked him to read through my file of censorship materials and to record his thoughts. His essay, prepared without extensive legal research, is offered more as an attorney's reflections on the problem than as professional legal opinion. The third section of this issue deals with preparation--"what to do." Here are articles providing two formats for writing rationales, each with its own model. Here, too, are articles by Haywood on People for the American Way and Ray on self censorship. Finally, section four includes some things that I would like to see become regular parts of FOCUS. Sharon Patrick offers an extensive interview with Martha Cottrill, who retired after a forty year teaching career in Chillicothe, and R. E. Stratton helps us launch a "Comment and Response" section.

As we close out this year of Orwell's fearful prophecies, we must bear in mind that censorship's new wave does not loom somewhere in our future. It is well upon us.

Ohio University-Chillicothe
Chillicothe, Ohio

KEEP THE CLOCKS FROM STRIKING THIRTEEN BY SPEAKING OUT AGAINST CENSORSHIP IN 1984 AND BEYOND

by
James E. Davis

We need to speak out against censorship! We need to say more in 1984 and beyond about what is happening in 1984 the year and what happened in Nineteen Eighty-Four the book. There are striking parallels, and by pinpointing some of them we may be able to slow down or stop some negative occurrences or to head off some things before they start. But we need to speak out loudly and regularly if we are going to do so, and before we do that there are a number of things we need to know about what is happening and some ways of doing something about it.

We may be able to keep our clocks from striking 13; for as the book begins that is what the clocks are doing: "It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen." (p. 3) From that opening sentence with clocks striking thirteen the book continues to present a world permeated with such slogans as HATE WEEK, WAR IS PEACE, FREEDOM IS SLAVERY, IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH. This novel uses censorship as one of its major themes and presents nearly all forms of censorship, at least as completely as any novel ever written.

Yes, from that opening sentence with clocks striking thirteen Orwell goes on to portray a society with nothing resembling our FIRST AMENDMENT. Every piece of information, indeed all expression of whatever kind is fully filtered through the MINISTRY OF TRUTH. Winston Smith's life is even endangered by the keeping of a diary. Big brother is much more interested in staying in power than with anything approaching the common good. Most of Big Brother's communications are false. His predictions are always inaccurate. But, of course, his predictions which do not come true are made to disappear through censorship. People disappear too--the ultimate solution, the ultimate censorship.

There are also in Nineteen Eighty-Four THOUGHT POLICE and THOUGHT CRIME. Big Brother affirms that: "Who controls the past controls the future: Who controls the present controls the past." And many big brothers are constantly watching to achieve this reality control. It is essential to rewrite past communications to fit the new needs of the government. Winston Smith's job is to rewrite history--to change past predictions and to eliminate persons from the records who have become NONPERSONS. The novel makes clear how absolutely essential it is for a society to have an accurate record of its past, if it is to know how to function in a humane manner. By censoring all information, Big Brother controls the reality of citizens. TV screens that permit the rapid flow of information are two-way, permitting the THOUGHT POLICE to observe citizens, and providing imagery that products desired responses--hatred of the enemy and love of Big Brother.

"All that was needed was an unending series of victories over our own memory. 'Reality control,' they called it; in Newspeak, 'doublethink.'" (p. 36) But no one is trying to control our memories today! Today is not a bright cold day in April, and our clocks are not striking thirteen--OR ARE THEY? Listen to some of these events:

ITEM: In January of this year a group of Independence, Missouri, parents objected to some books, such as CHANGING BODIES, CHANGING LIVES and OUR BODIES, OURSELVES, used in a family relations class at William Chrisman High School.
The parents, many associated with the Pro-Family Forum, brought photographs of the books as proof that they were being displayed in the classroom. Fred Keil, a part-time janitor at the school, had noticed the books while cleaning the classroom last October. Members of the Pro-Family Forum suggested that he get photographs. The janitor/ thought policeperson said, "The parents didn't know what was going on until I started leaking the information." In other words spying and reporting. The spokesperson for the parents, a man named Mike Ethington, incidentally, or perhaps not so incidentally, a former state representative and Republican candidate for the 5th district congressional seat, said that what the parents mainly wanted was "an admission that the books were 'filthy' and assurance that the books, or similar books, will not be used in the future." (KANSAS CITY STAR, March 12, 1984)

ITEM: In 48 of the 50 states last year there were attempts to remove, alter, or restrict textbooks, library books, teaching materials, and courses. What was the problem? The books and materials did not coincide with the censor's view of the way things should be. To me, that is obvious reality control.

ITEM: In New York State, for example, over 20 percent of the school personnel responding to a survey conducted by the Freedom to Learn Project of the People for the American Way reported censorship attempts during the past three years. Attempts by women's groups and minorities are not generally as successful as those of ultra-fundamentalists, according to Barbara Parker writing in the January 21, 1984, NEW YORK TIMES. She reports that their attempts to ban textbooks and literature that probe past and present social issues are becoming increasingly successful. Their use of the term "secular humanism," modern American THOUGHT CRIME, to brand anything they don't agree with is well known. They conclude that anything that isn't "God-centered" is ipso facto "man-centered" and unacceptable in the schools. Their "thought police," most notably Norma and Mel Gabler look for "thought crime" primarily in the form of secular humanism ad nauseum. They find it everywhere. Alleged "secular humanism" has been used to ban courses that explore the theory of evolution, the controversy over the Vietnam War, the Watergate experience, and current national problems such as poverty, drug use, the arms race, and shifting roles in the American family. Here are some specific examples:

In 1981, Laidlaw Brothers, a division of Doubleday, bowed to demands of the "scientific creationists" and deleted the word "evolution" from its only high school biology textbook. The publisher said that the word was omitted "to avoid the publicity that would surround a controversy." ("People for the American Way Fact Sheet," May 2, 1983)

Last year, in Folsom, California, 146 volumes of THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY were banished to a storage room--before being returned to the publisher--because of 13 "inappropriate" words. The same dictionary has been banned from use in Texas classrooms as well as in others in towns in Ohio, Indiana, Alaska, and Missouri. (PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN by Barbara Parker and Stephanie Weiss. Washington, D.C., People for the American Way, 1983, p. 27.)

In 1982, members of Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum succeeded in eliminating all required reading lists from the high school English curriculum in St. David, Arizona. Targets of the campaign: OF MICE AND MEN, LORD OF THE FLIES, and classics by Poe Hawthorne, Stevenson, and Hemingway (Ibid.).

In Fremont, Ohio, after complaints that a passage in James Baldwin's IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK was "sexually explicit," a compromise was reached: The book is now being taught with eight pages torn out of each edition (PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN, p. 28).

As Barbara Parker, Director of the Freedom to Learn Project, says:

> Censorship today is more than just an ugly word. It's a frightening and increasingly powerful political phenomenon. If it continues to go unreported and unchallenged, its effects will be even more far-reaching than the chill it casts on public school classrooms and libraries. What is at stake in censorship struggles is more than the freedom to learn. Our tradition as a pluralistic democracy begins in local communities--and in the public schools. (ATTACKS ON THE FREEDOM TO LEARN, People for the American Way, 1983, p. 7)

You say the clocks aren't striking thirteen, that there aren't those attempting to control our reality. Before you conclude that too strongly, listen to what the censors are saying:

> My 11-year old brought home BLUBBER by Judy Blume. Having been alerted by your articles, I read the book. The word that best describes it is "distasteful."
>
> The story concerns an over-weight girl who is constantly ridiculed by her classmates. It might have had some redeeming value if the classmates eventually saw the error of their attitude, but they do not.
>
> There was the description of a little boy picking his nose that was repulsive and uncalled for. Blume's "bathroom humor," for which she is noted, comes through in another scene when two girls relieve themselves on the neighbor's lawn to "pay him back" for some supposed injustice.
>
> I talked with the grade school principal, who happened to be a friend and a Christian, and he was astounded. He has pulled every Judy Blume book off the shelves. (PRO-FAMILY FORUM ALERT--2, May, 1984)

> As long as the schools continue to teach ABNORMAL ATTITUDES and ALIEN thoughts, we caution parents NOT to urge their children to pursue high grades and class discussion, because the harder students work, the greater their chance of brainwashing.--Mel and Norma Gabler, Education Research Analysts, Inc. (Handbook No. 1)

> I hope I live to see the day when, as in the early days of our country, we won't have any public schools. The churches will have taken

> them over again and Christians will be running them. (AMERICA CAN BE SAVED, p. 53)
>
> (Textbooks) are nothing more than Soviet propaganda . . . . Parents should rise up in arms to throw out every textbook.--Rev. Jerry Falwell, President, Moral Majority (BUFFALO EVENING NEWS, 7/12/81)
>
> The facts of life can be told in 15 minutes . . . . Sex education is the principle cause of teenage pregnancy.--Phyllis Schlafly, President, Eagle Forum (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 7/25/82)
>
> Modern public education is the most dangerous single force in a child's life: religiously, sexually, economically, patriotically, and physically.--Rev. Tim LeHaye (THE BATTLE FOR THE FAMILY, p. 89)
>
> When a student reads in a math book that there are no absolutes, suddenly each value that he has been taught is destroyed. And the next thing you know, the student turns to crime and drugs. --Mel Gabler (AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD JOURNAL, June, 1979)
>
> Allowing a student to come to his own conclusions about abstract concepts creates frustrations. Ideas, situation ethics, values, anti-God humanism--that's what schools are teaching--and concepts. Well, a concept never will do anyone as much good as a fact. (Ibid.)

Are you sure you aren't beginning to hear the clocks striking thirteen? If you don't yet hear the thirteenth strike, maybe this will cause it: In 1982, according to every major source of data on censorship activity, a record number of attempts was made to remove a wide variety of textbooks, library books, instructional materials, and courses from public schools across the country. Among the targets: NEWSWEEK, IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK, BRAVE NEW WORLD, 1984, THE AMERICAN HERTIAGE DICTIONARY, OF MICE AND MEN, THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK, sex education and drug education courses, textbooks that encourage classroom discussion. one school banned MAKING IT WITH MADEMOISELLE until it was pointed out that the book, published by MADEMOISELLE magazine, was a how-to dressmaking book for teenagers. One hundred forty-eight books have been challenged in 34 states; 400 schools have reported censorship challenges ; 900 challenges reported to the Office of Intellectual Freedom.

A 1982 national survey of high school librarians reported not only an increase in censorship attempts, but a dramatic increase—from 1 percent to 17 percent--in the number of respondents who said that in their communities there are "locally organized groups of public school censors." (PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN, p. 10)

In 1982, the publishers of five major homemaking texts were forced to revise all 1982-83 editions to make sure that definitions of "family" included only references to persons related by blood or by marriage. (PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN, p. 28)

In the February 1983 issue of the PRO-FAMILY FORUM NEWSLETTER, thousands of grassroots activists were told:

> It just may be that Hitler's burning of anti-Nazi books prior to World War II has made us have an unholy respect for anything printed in book form. Just because a book has been published does not mean that it has an eternal right to exist or to be read....Some things must be kept, and yes, some things may be burned.

During the past five years, the number of national organizations that spend considerable time, energy, and money attacking the public schools has grown dramatically. Among them: Rev. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, the Pro-Family Forum, the Heritage Foundation, Paul Weyrich's Free Congress Research Foundation, Howard Phillips' Conservative Caucus. There agenda is clear: The schools should be purged of books, materials, and courses that encourage children to think for themselves.

The education consultants to all of these groups--and their legions of local activists--are professional censors Mel and Norma Gabler, whose non-profit corporation, Educational Research Analysis, is located in Longview, Texas. The Gablers, whose "textbook reviews" have been used to spark censorship controversies in all 50 states, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, claim that theirs is the "nation's largest textbook review clearinghouse." Half of all state level respondents to a 1980 national censorship survey indicated that the Gablers' activities had affected textbook adoption proceedings in their states. In 1982, record numbers of candidates backed by the Moral Majority, Eagle Forum, the Pro-Family Forum, and countless other state and local anti-public education groups ran for election to local school boards.

THE ECONOMICS OF CENSORSHIP

Texas and California, as the major purchasers of textbooks, have the economic power to dictate content of textbooks that are used nationally. Publishers admit: "It would be difficult to write off the Texas market. If we couldn't sell a book (in Texas) without 'creationism' in it, (for example), I imagine you'd see it in there." Another publisher has said: "If they (Texas) back us up against the wall and say, 'You either take something out or you won't sell the book in Texas, 'then we'll take it out." (People for the American Way Censorship Fact Sheet, April, 1983)

Restrictive textbook content guidelines, such as those of Texas, influence publishers to denigrate science, distort history, discourage classroom discussion and disregard literary integrity. In 1978, four major publishers of literature anthologies dropped Shirley Jackson's award-winning 1949 short story, "The Lottery," from their national editions. A publishing official explained: If the book contained the story, "they wouldn't be bought in Texas." (PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN, p. 27)

In 1981, the publisher of THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY agreed to delete "certain offensive words" in order to make the dictionary acceptable for purchase by the state of Texas. (Ibid.)

ORTHODOXY IN 1984

In 1984 "Orthodoxy means not thinking--not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness." Orthodoxy is to close the book. One of the U. S. Supreme Court justices in a recent case, Island Trees, I believe, talks about censorship resulting in a "pall of orthodoxy." One of the functions of literature in a free society is to help protect us from this "pall of orthodoxy." We heard from censors earlier in the spirit of closing books. It is high time now that we hear from anti-censors, in this case from modern American authors in defense of opening books.

> JUDY BLUME: I see a tendency for adults who can't control everything that's happening in their lives to try to control their children's lives. One place to begin is by controlling your child's reading....Let children read whatever they want and then talk about it with them. If parents and kids can talk together, we won't have as much censorship because we won't have as much to fear. Parents who believe that their children have the right to read, the right to information, the right to know, must become as vocal as the vocal minority. (Barbara Karlin, "Blume Speaks Out on Speaking Out," LOS ANGELES TIMES, Oct. 18, 1981)
>
> STUDS TERKEL: It doesn't surprise me, but it makes me sad. Parents are heroes and heroines, and it's sad what happens when they shut children off. The important thing is to read and develop your own sense of morality. (Erie, PA TIMES, Feb. 2, 1982)
>
> KURT VONNEGUT: When I was a boy, these same old, closed, deeply religious communities were lynching human beings. Now that they're lynching books, I suppose you could say we're getting somewhere.
>
> NORMA KLEIN: If this continues, we will have no books that kids want to read. I believe children and adolescents are keenly aware of the hypocrisy around them. Juveniles search for honesty in literature....If we censor our books and stop writing about feelings that are so important to these children, we are betraying them. (PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN, p. 33)
>
> LLOYD ALEXANDER: Literature is more important than any one of its practitioners. Its strength lies in its diversity. Small wonder that dictators burn books before they do likewise to people who disagree with them. And each book is a human statement and we need those differences. The society where only one opinion is acceptable, where conformity and docility are the highest virtues, is the cultural equivalent of an Egg McMuffin. (Comments at the American Booksellers Association meeting in Anaheim, SAN DIEGO UNION, June 20, 1982)
>
> JUDITH GUEST: I think what appears to be lack of trust in others—in their ability to interpret and decide for themselves --is, in fact, a lack of trust in one's own beliefs; that, somehow, when they are stacked up against an alien or threatening idea, they won't be able to hold their own. But they must. Or, sooner or later, they will fall. That is the way the world changes, there is neither truth nor growth; there is only fear, hypocrisy, and deadness of spirit. When you withhold information from people, what you are protecting them from is maturity. The person shielded from the knowledge of the world is the person who is doomed never to grow up. (Address to the NCTE Spring Conference in Minneapolis, April, 1982)

THE RIGHT TO LEARN IS ALWAYS IN DANGER

The right to learn is always in danger. The battle for intellectual freedom must be waged again and again, and this is true, not only publically with the obvious reactionaries, but privately, internally as well. We must know where we stand and make sure that stance is strong. My stance is strong, but it is not really so much against anything; it is rather for some thing. I am for finding the best materials and instructional strategies available to teach our children well. I am for finding ways to communicate to the public what the schools are doing. I am for communicating with seeming censors and seeming anti-censors alike. We are all in this education business together whether we like it or not. I believe that if we think and work constructively together most censorship can be prevented before it starts. Some suggested strategies:

ALA BANNED BOOKS ROAD SHOW

The American Library Association has an exhibit of 60 books recently banned from schools and public libraries around the nation. The exhibit includes George Eliot's SILAS MARNER, John Steinbeck's THE GRAPES OF WRATH, Margaret Mitchell's GONE WITH THE WIND, and William Shakespeare's THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. There are also more recent best-sellers: Ora Levin's ROSEMARY'S BABY, Ken Kesey's ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST, Bernard Malamud's THE FIXER, and J. D. Salinger's THE CATCHER IN THE RYE.

HAVE AUTHORS WRITE ANSWERS

Another strategy is to have authors write answers to students. From author and former English teacher Robin Brancato writing in the Connecticut English Journal in the fall of 1980:

This letter came to me from Wisconsin. It was written on December 1, 1978. It says:

Dear Mr. (sic) Brancato:

I am an eighth grade student at Marshfield Junior High School in Marshfield, Wisconsin, and recently I read your novel WINNING. I enjoyed the story but offended by the bad language. It's my feeling that authors today think that bad language and sex are needed to keep the reader's interest. I disagree and I know that other students feel the same way I do. I would be very interested in hearing your reasons for your choice of words. If you can find the time, please write and let me know how and why you chose the words you do. (p. 104)

Yours truely (sic)
Shawn Mitchell

Dear Shawn:

Your letter concerning language in young adult novels is interesting and pertinent. I agree that choice of language is often a problem for writers of books for young people. I suppose I don't like "bad language" any more than you do. The main trouble with it, from my point of view, is that it's unimaginative, boring and lazy. In conversation it often fills in where original and interesting language ought to be.

However, my business as a writer is not so much to pass judgment on how people speak, but to try to record their speech accurately for the sake of telling a story whose underlying values I hope are moral and positive. When I employ "bad language," as you call it, and references to sex, it's not because I think these are needed to sell books or to hold the reader's interest, but because sex and body functions and the names for them, both polite and impolite, are part of life and I am interested in portraying life as it really is.

If I fudge on details by creating an angry football player who says, "Oh, sugar," who will trust me later when I try to convey the important things that athletes think and feel? I could, of course, choose to write only about people who use "good language," but that would eliminate a lot of possibilities for characters.

I guess that what it comes down to is that even though I too dislike "bad language," that doesn't keep me from liking or even loving a lot of people who use it. I want them in my books too, even at the risk of offending a few readers.

I hope that you will continue your interest in reading and language. I hope that fewer people in the future will feel the need to use lazy, unimaginative language, so that it will fade away and I won't have to put it in my books. And I also hope that you will come to agree with me that what's more important in judging people in both real life and in literature is not the purity of the language but the goodness of their spirits.

My best wishes,
Robin Brancato

(p. 105)

FREEDOM TO LEARN CITIZEN'S GUIDE

You can use suggestions from PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN: A CITIZEN'S GUIDE:

1. Every school system should have written policies for the selection of library books, textbooks, etc.
2. The selection policy should be well publicized and well understood by the community at large as well as by all members of the education community.
3. The school system should have a written procedure for handling complaints about library books, textbooks, and instructional materials and courses.

4. Procedures that have been established for handling complaints about materials should be followed to the letter.

5. A written statement of the school system's curriculum, goals and philosophy of education should be available to the community. How textbooks, library books, and other instructional materials are selected to help meet those goals should be carefully explained.

6. School boards should have a policy for verifying that names on petitions presented to the board are those of residents of the community.

7. If a teacher or librarian is accused of teaching or disseminating "objectionable" material, that person should be fully apprised of the charge at the earliest possible moment.

8. Anyone who has a complaint about the school system or any of its teaching materials deserves a fair and courteous hearing.

9. Teachers and administrators have every right to point out distortions or misinterpretations of material labeled "objectionable."

10. School personnel should recognize that "secular humanism" is a catch-all charge that can--and usually does--cover anything that school critics want it to.

11. The school board and administration should never abandon their teachers. In a censorship incident, the board and administration have an obligation to their personnel as well as the students and the community that together they serve.

12. The school board should never give up its legal rights. Citizens' pressure groups have a right to express their views to the board. But nowhere is it written that their views should dictate--or take precedence over--board policy.

And remember: the propaganda device of the Big Lie does not work as long as the mind remembers and thinks about the past. Ultimately Winston Smith is caught by the Thought Police for the crime of thinking, and is subjected to brain washing. Even brain washing does not drive out of Smith's mind the belief that four is four and five is five. He will not agree that four is five, when a representative of Big Brother tells him so. He is therefore faced with torture, and under torture, does at last agree that four is five if Big Brother says so.

But in Nineteen Eighty-Four, while Smith did have some autonomy, in the end he could not use it except to support the purposes of Big Brother. The novel is quite pessimistic about the possibilities of intellectual freedom in the world of 1984. Yet the ten million copies of this book that have been sold in the United States may serve as a warning--a powerfully dramatic one--of the future that may yet await us, if we do not take the warning seriously and say more in 1984 against censorship.

Not only can teachers say more against censorship; students can too and should not be isolated from controversies. Learning how controversies are created, as well as how they are resolved, can--and should be--an education in democracy for everyone involved.

Steven Pico is a good example of a student not isolated from controversy. In fact, he became one of the plaintiffs in the PICO VS. ISLAND TREES case in New York. Pico, now on the staff of the National Coalition Against Censorship, says:

> My message to those fighting censorship battles today is simple: differences of opinion, open discussion and debate only enhance freedom of expression and freedom of thought. My advise is twofold: First, be tolerant of those with whom you disagree; they have a right to hold and espouse beliefs just as you do. And, second, never be afraid to confront those who act to limit the freedom of others. (PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN, p. 6)

Let's not let doublethink arrest the course of history. Our clocks are not striking thirteen yet, I hope. We are still not afraid to entrust the people with books.

I close with a statement Senator Edward Kennedy made in an address at Falwell's Liberty Baptist College on October 3, 1983:

> Those who favor censorship should recall that one of the first books ever burned was the first English translation of the Bible. As President Eisenhower warned in 1953, "Don't join the bookburners. . .the right to say ideas, the right to record them, and the right to have them accessible to others is unquestioned--or this isn't America." And if that right is denied, at some future day the torch can be turned against any other book or any other belief. Let us never forget: Today's Moral Majority could become tomorrow's persecuted minority. (CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 29, No. 132, Wednesday, October 5, 1983)

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GUIDELINES, CENSORSHIP, AND THE BASIE BAND--A PERSONAL VIEW

by
Charles Suhor

The history of this manuscript is of some interest. It began in 1981 as a long letter to Diane Shugert, Central Connecticut State University. Diane was then chair of the NCTE Standing Committee Against Censorship and a member of the 1980 NCTE Task Force on Censorship and Guidelines. Censorship and guidelines were being widely discussed--not only within NCTE (see "What Qualities Distinguish Censorship from Guidelines?" English Journal, March 1981, pp. 92-94), but also in the national media. On 60 Minutes, Norma Gabler said, "When we do it, it's called censorship; when they do it, it's called guidelines." In 1982 the Task Force completed its "Statement on Censorship and Professional Guidelines," published elsewhere in this issue.

Meanwhile, I had rewritten the Shugert letter as an article and it was published in October of 1982 in Free Speech, a journal of the Speech Communication Association. A month later I got a call from Henrietta Wexler of American Education, the U.S. Department of Education journal, expressing interest in reprinting the article, but only if a conservative writer--she had one of the Gablers in mind--could provide an alternative viewpoint. (Odd, I thought. I didn't consider my views in the article to be especially "liberal.") The other writer never showed up, and when I made a follow up query in mid-1983 I learned that the topic was considered too volatile because an election year was coming up. (For an interesting, though unabashedly liberal analysis of American Education under the Reagan Administration, see Joseph Sarthory's "A Right Turn for American Education?" in School Board News, January 12, 1983.)

I've recast the article for Focus along the lines of my original letter to Diane Shugert, which wasn't conceived as a linear argumentation. I suppose it belongs to no particular genre. Like many correspondences, it's Gonzo meditation that trusts the reader to bear with digressions and shifts in tone. In short, it's a personal view.

What do you call it--censorship or guidelines--when a district's curriculum guide is invoked in telling an English teacher to remove certain works by Aristotle and Machiavelli from his 10th grade program? When the Council on Interracial Books for children urges librarians not to buy books that stereotype minorities? When a commercial publisher circulates in-house policies that call for weeding controversial materials from literary anthologies--materials that are offensive either to religious fundamentalists or to advocates of ethnic and sexual equality? My present, near-desperate feeling is that it's not possible to come up with fifty-words-or-less statement beginning with "Censorship is. . ." and another beginning "Guidelines are. . ."

The very process of defining confounds us. As the semanticists have noted, the structure of predication falsely suggests that static, invariant, and taxonomically adequate attributes can be predicated of a subject. Predication is a risky business when applied to a word like "chair"; what a monstrous problem when we are asked to apply it to abstractions like "censorship" and "guidelines."

Although I was brought up as a fervent Aristotelian, I dimly recognized the predication bear-trap as a teenager in New Orleans when I went through all-night arguments on the definition of jazz. The purists said that jazz is improvised music, which wasn't true because keyboard players were improvising all over the place in the eighteenth century. Besides that, Count Basie's band reading an arrangement is clearly jazzier than a couple of symphony musicians noodling ineptly with "Jada." Almost nobody involved in these arguments was pleased when I said that you can't come up with a definition of jazz that applies in a dependable way to the real world. You've got to list numerous jazz-like qualities, hierarchically if you want, then look at each performance and see if it partakes of some or all of these qualities, and to what degree, and with what amount of skill. So the symphony players doing a bad job on "Jada" were jazzy to the extent that they were improvising, but their articulation wasn't elastic like jazz phrasing, their melodies ignored devices like blue notes and certain grace notes and slurs and growls, and they lacked just about everything else on my list, or on anyone's list, of jazz-like qualities. And of course, Basie's sax section might exemplify virtually every jazz-like quality except improvisation when they read an arrangement.

To draw the obvious parallel, I think the sanest way of contrasting censorship and guidelines is by listing a series of qualities that guidelines can be said to embody, and by listing another list of qualities for censorship. There should probably also be a list of qualities held in common, because guidelines and censorship do resemble each other in important ways. Granted, anyone who prepares such a list will be juggling deduction and induction in very chancy ways, and playing God just as those who make definitions do. But it seems to me that lists of qualities acknowledge the squiggliness of real world events much better than definitions do.

The application of a list of guidelines/censorship qualities to particular documents could prove interesting, and disturbing. It might be that a position statement, brochure, or booklist from the Gablers of CIBC or NCTE shows certain qualities of guidelines and certain qualities of censorship. If so, that's a good starting point for discussion and action. Most documents from groups inclined to be "censorial" would, I suspect, show at least some qualities of guidelines, and we'd have to acknowledge that. Any list of qualities will make chronic labelers unhappy, because they like to stick with oversized predications, summary judgments like "Jones is a censor" or "We are an advisory group." But I can't think of a fairer way of stating the problem of guidelines and censorship or applying the terms to statements or documents.

I've attempted a list of qualities and censorship, followed by some qualities they appear to have in common. The list is highly tentative and is probably most useful as a vulnerable first draft. But it strikes me as an interesting way of attacking the problem. The list, in chart form, includes a point-by-point correspondence of items in each column.

Guideline	Censorship
--stresses selection and inclusion of material	--stresses exclusion and removal of materials
--states underlying principles	--offers *ad hoc* criticism, omitting or disguising underlying principles
--states positive criteria for inclusion	--states objections, "thou shalt nots"
--elaborates on statements via rational argumentation	--states arguments bluntly, without development

Guideline	Censorship
--avoids logical fallacies and propaganda techniques	--is illogical; uses propaganda techniques
--is pluralistic with regard to . religious and philosophical beliefs . political beliefs . personal morality and life styles	--is ideological with regard to . religious and philosophical belie . political beliefs . personal morality and life styles
--invites broad participation, especially on controversial points	--seeks to limit input, inviting only others of same persuasion
--acknowledges that points are arguable	--takes an absolute stand on points advanced
--includes some (but not all) individuals with special training or certification	--fails to make use of individuals with special training or certificati
--recognizes rights of individuals to dissent from a favored view	--seeks to impose the favored view on all others

Despite many differences with regard to inclusion and exclusion, guidelines and censorship both seem to have certain qualities in common. Both involve *a desire to limit people's access to particular materials and/or viewpoints.* This is a hard statement, but I can't dodge it no matter how hard I try. A committee preparing a guidelines list might omit *Little Black Sambo* because the book stereotypes the Black child and fails to meet the positive criteria of fair and dignified treatment of various ethnic groups. A negative, censorial list might differ only in that it includes *Little Black Sambo* on a list of books that should *not* be included in libraries. The explicit censorial element seems to have the very same motivation that prompted the guidelines committee to avoid mention of the book on its list. In both cases the clear intention is to downplay the book, and the hope is that there will be limited access to it because of the dissemination of the guidelines (which omit it) or the censorial list (which includes it).

Both guidelines and censorship *are acts of presumption; both "draw the line" at some point in determining whether materials should be included or excluded.* As noted in the lists above, the tone and content of criteria will tend to be different in guidelines. But both, self-evidently, have some sort of task to perform, whether it is furthering of a particular social or religious doctrine or judging whether seventh graders are smart enough or mature enough to read *Of Mice and Men*. Given the limited data base that we have for making all sorts of subjective judgments--about moral values, intelligence, maturity, or whatever--I think it's wise to acknowledge that the most enlightened sets of guidelines, like the most outrageous censorial documents, are created to some extent by dint of presumption.

Finally, *people who act as individuals or within groups to develop guidelines or to further censorship are engaged in legitimate activities in a democratic society.* I see an important distinction, both ethically and legally, between advocating censorship and direct censorial action. An individual or a pressure group that urges a school board to, say, exclude textbooks that teach evolution and include only those that teach a creationist theory is exercising legitimate Constitutional rights. Only the *fact* of removing evolution and requiring Biblical creationism would be subject to litigation, possibly on the grounds of separation of church and state. Hence, the Gablers are as much within their rights as an NCTE Committee to Revise Books for You.

Of course, questions of censorship in education have been debated at length for decades, even centuries--or else Socrates, that ancient corruptor of youth, would not have been required to drink hemlock. But it is only in recent years that the hulking dialectic we call public opinion has refined the issue in terms of the distinctions between guidelines and censorship. Among the more consistent voices on this question in recent years has been Edward Jenkinson, former chair of the NCTE Committee Against Censorship. At a Cincinnati convention session in 1980 Jenkinson said, "I do not object to guidelines. . .so long as they are voluntary, not mandatory. . . So long as they allow freedom of choice, not mandated selection. . . I do not fear guidelines that are sound attempts at consciousness-rating, so long as they remain just that. . . But I do fear those guidelines that give the protectors of the young license to go hunting through libraries and classrooms looking for the targets they can shoot down."

These are hard words. An even-handed application of Jenkinson's ideas, like the ones proposed in my lists, might prove embarrassing to certain anti-censorship groups as well as the censors who are the objects of their attacks. As St. Paul says, in some ways we all sin.

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THE CYCLE OF CENSORSHIP

by
ROBERT SMALL

Those of us -- teachers, librarians, authors, publishers, book sellers -- who face the problem of censorship in schools, in libraries, in bookstores, sometimes seem to act as if it is a new development, a symptom of the chaos of our times, an activity invented recently by a fundamentalist minister somewhere in the South. In fact, of course, censorship of books and other reading materials has been a widespread and generally accepted part of most societies throughout history. An hour spent at this past summer's exhibit on censorship at the New York Public Library would certainly have convinced anyone of that fact. After working one's way through that depressing but fascinating review of efforts to suppress bibles and philosophies as well as novels and works of art, it would be hard not to conclude that we, in this country, live in a blessed time of comparatively little censorship. Equally important, what censorship we do have to deal with is mostly voluntary actions by individuals or private groups. We have what might be called "democratic censorship;" that is, we are free to pressure for or against whatever might be published, sold, purchased, assigned, or read anywhere and by anyone; but we are pretty much left alone by government. Indeed, the upsurge in recent times of private efforts to censor or to force governments to censor is probably the result of the very limited amount of official censoring that our governments do.

Yet state censorship clearly marked most of history up to the last few decades, and it just as clearly continues to be a part of most countries in today's world. It is, in fact, only a short while since this country freed itself of most governmental censorship. The last part of the library's exhibit brings viewers up to the recent past and reminds them what a short time has passed since the U. S. Post Office stopped looking for illicitly mailed copies of Lady Chatterly's Lover. It also demonstrates that bans by the federal government on publishing, mailing, importing, and selling books on a proscribed list continued well into the lives of many of us.

The Censor

Protection of religious dogma was the point of much early censorship; sex and profanity worry today's descendents of Bowdler and Comstock, though religion is not forgotten by them. But whether it is based on objections to the use of "four-letter" words, to discussions and descriptions of sex, or to ideas deemed subversive, censorship is, it seems obvious, a result of a fundamentally similar attitude of mind on the part of all censors, whenever they may have lived and whatever their actual positions may be. The censor acts as he does from the belief that his position is correct and absolute and, perhaps more important, from the conviction that he has the right, the duty, the responsibility to stamp out what he sees as error, partly by silencing it generally and especially by protecting the innocent from its contamination. The would-be censor believes that, if all those who hold false ideas or who talk about things which are not meant to be discussed could only be silenced, such beliefs and attitudes would wither away. Then the young would grow up without knowing of those things, and the world would be improved, that is, reshaped in the form that the censor would like to see it take.

A certain attitude or frame of mind, is, therefore, essential if a direct effort at censorship is to take place. Equally important in many cases, however, seems to be a strong and wide-spread feeling of frustration. Such frustration may, of course, come from many sources. Life in today's world rarely remains the same for very long, and despair and unhappiness can result when a society changes faster than individuals are able to change or in directions that those individuals find offensive. As I pointed out elsewhere:

> Other conditions also produce frustration, of course, and thus a climate for censorship of school texts. Peaceful, rural areas have turned into suburban and urban areas in recent times, and with this change has come a rapid creation of new social and environmental problems. For people thus caught in a trap between life the way they want it to stay and a rapidly developing situation radically different from their wishes, the intrusion by the real world into the schools, particularly in the concrete form of materials in a textbook, can become a target which is both clear and unambiguous. (Davis, p. 60)

A sense of undeserved failure in their own lives and unfair success in the lives of others may also contribute to the censors' attack on books.

> Then, too, many people look around America and see and read reports of people earning large incomes, leading exciting lives, and possessing power, fame, and prestige. Their own lives, they see as much less, and much less than they may have hoped for when younger. Bored with the dullness of a repetitious job and a limited style of life, such people may turn to an attack on textbooks as a way of attacking those who write and publish such texts -- those who are seen as representing a sort of social and economic elite of the successful. (p. 60)

In addition, there are opportunities for the acquiring of fame and prestige through leadership of a protest organization. The excitement and social contacts of protest meetings, planning sessions, and so forth which come with many censorship efforts can do much to relieve the frustration of a routine life.

All of which is to say that the combination of strongly held views, frustration and dissatisfaction, and human nature, along with a belief in one's right to impose on others what is seen as the truth can produce a censor and a censorship movement. Since all of these factors are likely to be present in the world for some time to come, censorship is undoubtedly one of those factors which we will have to continue to face for the rest of our professional lives. Understanding its causes and the way in which efforts at censorship seem to work is obviously valuable to those of us who would avoid, moderate, or at least live through such efforts. Recent censorship efforts in the United States, certainly those directed at the public schools and libraries, seem to me to follow a similar pattern, what might be called a "censorship cycle." Understanding that cycle can help arm one against the anxiety and feeling of helplessness that being caught in a censorship controversy can bring on.

The Censorship Cycle

The prevalence of causes for censorship as well as groups seeking to bring censorship about might lead one to despair, as might also the number of cases reported each year and the seeming success of many censorship efforts directed at schools and libraries. Clearly, as instruments of the people, both institutions have always been in a delicate, sensitive position in the matter of censorship. Yet a study of many recent cases of censorship in the school suggest that few such cases end as successes for the censors. Again and again, a particular cycle seems to take place which, in time, halts the success of each effort to censor.

At first, in this cycle, an objection is raised to one or more aspects of a work in a library or a textbook used in a school. The objection, on the surface, may seem like a valid one to many in the community; and, as the matter gains publicity, the movement to "do something" about it grows in numbers. For example, in several recent cases involving English literature textbooks, the censors have pointed to passages in a few stories in which characters use what are sometimes called strong interjections or expletives. Objecting to these words as obscene and blasphemous, the originators of the censorship movements professed outrage that such words appear in school textbooks, and others agreed with them when the passages were pointed out to them.

As a second phase in this cycle, an active campaign materializes, and many citizens are drawn into the effort to apply censorship. Finally a teacher, a principal, a librarian, a school or library board is confronted with the objections. Of course, at each level, one of two things may happen: the offending material may be removed, or the censors may not be successful. In the latter case, the censors normally move to the next higher administrative level and continue their attack.

This stage, which might be called the "organize and attack" phase, usually involves mass meetings drawing hundreds of citizens, handbills citing passages and selections which are termed objectionable, and the formation of a committee with officers and a name such as Concerned Citizens for Decent Literature. From this group then comes a demand for the removal of the offending material. Although the school system or library ultimately may or may not give in to the demands, normally, given the slow workings of boards and administrators and the usual cautious attitudes of governing boards, nothing immediate is likely to happen. Rather, official statements to the effect that the issue is under consideration generally are issued by these boards. Such statements, however, rarely satisfy the censorship group; and further meetings, public statements, and appeals for action ensue.

On the other hand, when officials do accede to some demands of the censors, such moves almost never satisfy the censors once the movement has reached this level of activity. Rather, an interesting phenomenon usually seems to appear at about this point. The group, having grown rapidly and without any particular control, has enlisted many people who have fundamental differences among themselves. Their only common bond is their initial objection to some one aspect of school or library materials such as obscene words in several short stories or the presence on the library shelves of a steamy novel. As these differing elements now begin to examine the total package of school texts, library books, films, records, and so forth, the reasons for objection multiply. Objections to the political and economic content of texts and library holdings are voiced. Criticism of the pictures of ethnic, religious, and gender groups are made. The quality of the writing is attacked.

Caught up in the mood of censoring and more or less informal in organization, the group strains to accommodate the various and, at times, contradictory grounds for censoring different materials that its members are now finding. Several leaders appear and begin to draw attention to one or more of the objections and to demand action. As time passes, the objections become more and more diverse and all encompassing. Where the original complaint may have dealt with an explicit scene of sex in a required English text, it now grows to include voluntary as well as required materials in schools, books on the shelves in the library, and books and magazines for sale in the newsstands and drug stores. The attack spreads from the English class to all subjects, including science, industrial arts, and health, from the young adult section of the library to the entire library, from public institutions to private businesses, from books and magazines to movies and television. Objections are made not only to the content of the books but also to the political and social views and the private lives of their authors.

Although it is, of course, helpful if the school or library takes a strong but cautious stand against censorship during this process, the next phase of the cycle seems likely to happen whether or not the initial objection is met or resisted. The censors produce a crescendo of criticism with charges that communist subversion, atheism, free love, and drug use are being taught in the schools and promoted in the library. In addition, they achieve at least acrimonious public meetings and possibly panicky, ill-advised responses on the part of public officials. At this point, the censors seem to be at their most powerful, to be on the verge of total success.

Yet, at this moment, the censorship movement usually, though perhaps imperceptibly at first, begins to suffer a reversal. Supporters who joined initially when told that a specific book that was required reading for all students contained certain scenes and words which seemed offensive now find themselves associated with wild, unsupported claims. Moderate parents who originally became a part of the movement with some hesitation and only because the original, very specific grounds seemed just, now find themselves associated with the most extreme members of the community. Bit by bit, a reaction sets in. Especially if the school has established a means by which students can request that they be given alternative reading material and the library has been cautious about what books are in the children's and young adult sections, reasonable parents and leaders are now satisfied by the explanations of teachers and librarians about the nature and use of the books in question. The crowds at protest meetings grow smaller. A few ex-members of the censorship group speak out in support of schools and libraries, stressing their fundamental soundness, their need to challenge students with ideas, their right to include a variety of materials. As the movement shrinks, its spokesmen grow more extreme in an effort to hold it together, thus accelerating the decline.

At this point, the effort at censorship is dead, although it may continue to attract attention for a time. The school or library may decide that a relatively quiet, cautious position is the best approach; and, in fact, it probably is. But the censors have now been isolated by their own actions from the broad support they must have to succeed. Soon they will find themselves talking to the same people they always share their views with. Though a bitter, unpleasant mood will probably hang over the community for some time, direct censorship has failed. In fact, so disagreeable has the effort proved to most of those who became involved in it that the chances of future efforts at censorship gaining any great support are probably small unless the community's values are grossly offended, an event which is not too likely since both teachers and librarians will probably have learned caution from their experience.

If the school or library under attack has acted calmly and cautiously rather than engaging in extreme responses to the extreme actions of the would-be censors, it will in some ways be in a stronger position than before the episode, for the cycle generally ends with censor and censorship both in disrepute. The danger, of course, is that the price of this success may be excessive caution by teacher and librarian in the future. Fear of further attack, of a new round of the cycle, may cause self-censorship, a quiet, perhaps not even fully conscious, accession to the wishes of the censor. The true outcome of the cycle of censorship may be a pyrrhic victory for both sides and a residue of suppressed bitterness and frustration as the censors see no improvement and teachers and librarians feel that they are under continuing threat. In most cases where the cycle has played itself out in full, however, unhealthy self-censorship fades quickly, certainly more quickly than community distaste for censors and censorship in general.

The pain of governmental censorship comes through fines and prison sentences, confiscated books and unpublished novels. The pain of censorship in a system like ours comes through battles within communities, lasting personal animosity, and excessive caution resulting in self-censorship. Unpleasant as it is to be trapped in a divided and battling city or county, being controlled by a board of censors would be far worse, as the display at the New York Public Library reveals. Democratic censorship at least follows its cycle back to an acceptance of individual freedom. State censorship merely feeds upon itself and grows stronger.

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CENSORSHIP AND THE MONSTER WITHIN

by
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> The State insists that, by thus quarantining the general reading public against books not too rugged for grown men and women in order to shield juvenile innocence, it is exercising its power to promote the general welfare. Surely, this is to burn the house to roast the pig . . . The incidence of this enactment is to reduce the adult population of Michigan to reading only what is fit for children. -- Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter

I was in the Lower Forty-eight when summer madness struck. "Summer madness" is what a librarian here at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks calls the predictably vitriolic debate between those who want a book on homosexuality removed from a local high school library's shelves and those who believe A Way of Love, A Way of Life should stay. I will not comment at length on summer madness in Fairbanks, since I wasn't here to observe anything but the aftershocks. Also, Alaska is "The Last Frontier," and Fairbanks is still small enough and wild enough that "you learn to walk easy up here," as a bus driver said to me day before yesterday.

But it's probably safe to note in passing that Jane Tate, an area resident who has attacked the school board at its public meetings for months, indicated she would not rest content until all the books she objects to are banned: "We're going to get into the library shelves and clean them up," she said in the September 7 edition of the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (p. 2). This summer's acrimonious public debate in Fairbanks illustrates how two points of view (those who oppose high school students being exposed to A Way Love, A Way of Life and those who find having such a book available to high school students unobjectionable), can collide and result in people taking verbal pot shots at each other in letters to the editor, rather than finding a common ground for communication that leads to something more constructive than "all night meetings, threatening anonymous letters to local residents and threats on the school superintendent," in the newspaper's words.

Ms. Tate's drive to "clean up the shelves" raises more questions than it answers, and one of these questions is whether or not members of a community have the right to determine what their children shall read. I believe they do. How a community can best reach a consensus on which books should be shelved for public school consumption is an open question. Perhaps spirited public debate, even when intemperate, is a start toward finding a community consensus.

But as an educator, I am wary of the implications of Ms. Tate's proposed shelf cleaning. What she's talking about is censorship. Her desire to "clean the shelves" raises the familiar questions that ought to be asked when anyone proposes censorship. These are questions that those of us who teach communication arts and who think about the power of the written word ignore at the peril of our students' educations and our own professional integrity.

There are at least two types of censors: those who excise portions of information that if revealed might compromise factional or national security. Defense secrets are an example of information that is guarded lest it be used to an adversary's advantage. Another instance of censorship, more familiar to educators, is in the arts. Here censors change or ban altogether material that they believe might have deleterious effect on the morals of those who are exposed to it. Anyone who takes the time to research the history of artistic censorship will quickly be reminded that advocates of censorship from Plato onward have felt compelled to protect the "moral" integrity of audiences. From a historical perspective, sexual topics seem to have been the predominant preoccupation of American censors, if Supreme Court rulings may be used as a guide.

In both types of censorship mentioned above, a censor is one who interrupts a message from the source and attempts to govern what the audience will be permitted to experience. In his provocative The Anatomy of Censorship, Jay E. Daily notes that censorship "forbids knowledge of works already in the communication stream" (1973, p. 3). If we confine our discussion to literature, a censor is like an uninvited editor, one who either omits those portions of the text the censor deems objectionable, or bans an entire text. Of course, what the censor finds immoral in a work of literature depends upon the censor's standards of what constitutes "moral" or "decent" literature.

When children are involved, it is easy to make a case for the censor "protecting" the young and impressionable. But when a censor bans a book for the rest of us, one must wonder if the concept of protection ought to remain operative. Who is protecting whom from what? And why?

Whether or not some adults may be more vulnerable to morally subversive influences (whatever that means), if a censor is permitted to determine what we read, even if the censor's efforts are intended to "protect" us from subjectively defined "offensive" literature, isn't the censor also controlling what we think? Surely there are strong connections between how and what we think and what we read. Otherwise, aside from literature's considerable value as entertainment, why read at all? And why encourage students of all ages to read more and to develop sharply critical minds for assessing others' ideas?

Ideas by themselves are morally neutral. In a democracy--which depends upon an informed voting citizenry--we must trust that the populace will make better decisions about how its country will be governed if an abundance of information and a diversity of opinion is permitted. But those who would "protect" adults (again, I take children through high school as a special case and believe parents and communities have a right to decide what their children shall read and not read) by "cleaning the shelves" of a public or university library fear that adults like themselves will be morally compromised by reading certain materials that "sownen into synne," as Chaucer puts in his "Retraction" to The Canterbury Tales. For the censorious, it's as if the objectionable material were a moral contagion--a virulent virus that must be quarantined. The censor or censoring body itself, however, is presumed to be somehow immune to infection.

At this point it's worth asking whether book banners and burners are more concerned about the offensive material or the effect such material will have on others who are assumed to be more vulnerable than themselves. Censors imply that the morally questionable material's potential for causing harm to the reader is stronger than the reader's ability to resist the siren song of depravity. The censorious are apprehensive of what might happen if certain ideas, words or information are permitted to rattle around in the brains of their morally soft peers.

Their fear goes deeper, I believe, than an altruistic concern for others' moral probity. They fear whatever threatens their own notions of who they are and what they think. Here, with Daily's help, it is possible to define what all those words the censorious use—words like lewd, immoral and obscene—mean: they are labels censors attach to that which they cannot accept about themselves. (p. 120)

If this definition of "obscene" material is valid (and one must admit that it's infinitely more precise than the circular word games the courts have played in their efforts to define "obscenity"), then censorship can never be an effective method of allaying the censor's fears. Censors fear a "prurient interest" which they think--and correctly so--lurks inside their less upright brothers and sisters. Terrible fantasies! Unthinkable desires! But fantasies and desires are part of being human, whether we agree with the rest of Freud or not. And censors are human too, just like the rest of us. However, instead of acknowledging and examining whatever fearsome demons may be chasing around inside their own hearts and minds, censors place that which they cannot accept about themselves outside. They ban books because it is easier to identify and villify a material object than to do the hard work of facing up to who they really are and what they think about when no one is watching. I say "They," but I mean to include all of us as "they," for all of us who dislike something about ourselves--and who doesn't--are guilty of a kind of censorship.

Every time we push away a thought because we fear it, we are guilty of internal censoring and we feed the horrible dragon that we will not confront. Thoughts are nothing but thoughts (just as ideas are morally neutral), and they exist whether or not we find them discomforting. We cannot protect ourselves from ourselves, from what we think, any more than the censor can protect him or her self from that which is judged offensive by them. We give thoughts and words (be they our own or someone else's, say, in a book) too much puissance when we attempt to repress them ourselves or supress them in our adult libraries. By saying "this literature (which is nothing more than thoughts given form) is too much for some minds to handle," we are saying more about our estimation of others' ability to discern the truth for themselves and what is edifying for them to read then we are about the morally repugnant material. Are homosexuality or pornography or Communism--you fill in the blanks, as these are all creatures of our collective mind--really so powerful that we must fear our own creations? What, after all, can anyone think or say that you and I might not have already imagined?

It's logical that those who believe in artistic censorship for adult audiences resist the Jungian and Buddhistic idea that there is one mind, a kind of super-consciousness that transcends individuality. For the censor in us all, there is an I--all pure and hold--and a you who bears watching. It's the "you," the externalized fear of what we refuse to admit to ourselves about ourselves, that the censor protects. But it is surely delusory to set myself above and apart from others in the belief that those less godly than I require my moral guidance and protection. If what an author writes cannot essentially harm me, why should it harm you?

I believe, and it is a matter of faith, in the mind's ultimate inviolability. Nothing I think or say, nothing I read or hear, can impair my students' or my own intrinsic ability to make up our own minds, to think for ourselves, to choose what we will read and what we will not read. Certainly our choices in both literature and life—and there is a difference—are often clouded by our own or others' persuasive rhetoric or our own or other's habitual ways of looking at ourselves and the world. But the boat of the mind rights itself eventually.

As adults and as educators, I believe it is part of our responsibility to encourage our adult students to experience a diversity of reading material, even material that we ourselves might find morally suspect. The teacher who directly or indirectly says "I am going to decide for you" takes the responsibility to choose away from his or her equals. Again, the fact that we find anything we read morally repugnant says more about what we fear in ourselves than it does about the literature we revile.

Ultimately, people will think what they want, and thank God for that. What they do, of course is another matter, and a society's laws restrict or encourage activities with greater or lesser success. But no board of censors, no court and no law can restrict the mind's freedom to think what it will.

A public adult library as well as the entire university or college campus should offer access to the products of free thought. The librarians and professors who direct us only to those books that they approve and discourage reading of those with which they disagree or find distasteful for whatever reason, are concealing information. If some books are missing from the shelves because the shelves have been sanitized according to any person or group's prejudices, then where are those books locked up? Censors sequester those missing books in themselves, for they know what is secret, whatever they deny the rest of us for our own "good."

But theirs is a secret that is no secret; whatever has been thought will be thought again. It will not go away. Whatever we find unacceptable will rattle our cages until we let the monsters out and discover they are our ghostly creations, ours until we free our minds by embracing whatever we find reprehensible in ourselves.

The real monster is our desire to control others, to grant access to whatever we agree with and to hide whatever we disparage. As teachers and as human beings we must never say "this book is so powerful and harmful that it might control you, so I'll control you by keeping it from you." To such self-appointed guardians of public morality adult citizens who trust themselves to know what's good for them will say "No thanks."

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A FEW BOOKS AND ARTICLES ABOUT CENSORSHIP

by
Ken Donelson

Some readers who glance through this bibliography will doubtless wonder at my pawky sense of humor or my sanity. Yes, it does seem long. No, it is not complete or anything close to it. Censorship, pro and con, has attracted an incredible number of writers over the years, each of whom secretly believes that she or he has something unique to add to the subject. Rarely is that true, though the author usually offers a slightly new way of looking at the world or censorship.

I've divided the bibliography into sections on books and then articles, but I begin with a few titles that are so basic that anyone curious about the field needs to know them. My choices are, of course, my own, and those who have studied the field will wonder why I ignored this or chose that. So be it. I added a few, a very few, articles from law journals. Please don't assume they are hard to get through. The best of them are readable and scholarly, but that's equally true of the best articles and the best books.

Some Basics:

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2. Ralph E. McCoy, *Freedom of the Press: A Bibliocyclopedia Ten-Year Supplement*. Southern Illinois University, Press, 1979.

3. *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*. A bi-monthly edited by Judith F. Krug with a sizable bibliography at the close of each issue. Available from the American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

4. *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, 2nd ed. American Library Association, 1983. *The* book librarians know and use about censorship. Practical and usable.

5. *The Students' Right to Read*. National Council of Teachers of English, 1982. The official policy statement of NCTE.

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Books Worth Knowing:

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3. Haig A. Bosmajian, ed., *Censorship: Libraries and the Law*. Neal-Schuman, 1983. A good compilation of court cases involving librarians and censorship.

4. Paul S. Boyer, *Purity in Print: The Vice-Society and Book Censorship in America*. Scribner, 1968. The best book on censorship in America.

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16. Evelyn Geller, *Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, 1876-1939: A Study in Cultural Change*. Greenwood Press, 1984.

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19. James C. Hefley, *Textbooks on Trial*. Victor Books, 1976. Mel and Norma Gabler's works and triumphs.

20. Nat Hentoff, *The First Freedom: The Tumultuous History of Free Speech in America*. Delacorte, 1980.

21. Edward B. Jenkinson, *Censors in the Classroom: The Mind Benders*. Southern Illinois Press, 1979.

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Articles Worth Knowing:

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3. _____, "The Crusade to Ban Books." Saturday Review, June 1981, pp. 17-19.

4. Lester Asheim, "Not Censorship, but Selection." Wilson Library Bulletin, September 1953, pp. 63-67. A most important statement.

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TELL CITY REJECTS THE SECULAR HUMANISM CHARGE

by
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Probably no more than twenty citizens in Tell City had heard the phrase secular humanism before the winter of '82. Probably no more than a dozen could have defined it then, and that number has undoubtedly not doubled since. For few persons in this country--outside the ranks of the New Right that is spreading the charge--know what the term means. But more and more teachers are feeling the sting of the seemingly innocent phrase as they are accused of preaching a religion that they know not.

The tale of Tell city began when a ninth grader showed his mother a few passages in John Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men and told her that he did not want to read the book as part of his class assignment. The English teacher told the mother that her son could read Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage as independent reading while the rest of the class studied the Steinbeck novel. The mother apparently accepted the alternate assignment, and later she even told the media that she and her son had been treated well by the teacher. But the mother also talked with her minister about the novel, and he was displeased with the assignment, with the Tell City schools, and with the English department.[1]

The Reverend Don Reynolds, pastor of the Abundant Life Church, had just opened a Christian academy in Tell City, a southern Indiana town of nine thousand, nestled in a bend of the Ohio River. He told his congregation and at least one other minister about the "evil" novel. The two ministers prepared a petition to be presented to the school board, and at the January meeting, a group of ten demanded that books "containing profanity and suggestive remarks" not be used in the schools. Then the minister from nearby Hawesville, Kentucky, who was acting as spokesman for the group, accused the school board of being "anti-God." Thus began a three-month schoolbook protest that brought television cameras, nationally prominent textbook protesters, and divisiveness to Tell City.

Shortly after the mother asked for the alternate assignment, members of the Tell City school board discovered that they had never formally adopted their four-year-old policy for handling complaints about teaching materials. So the five-member board voted unanimously to make the policy official. Thus Tell City joined the ranks of approximately 50 percent of the nation's school systems that have formal procedures for handling complaints about teaching materials and that also have materials selection policies. For at least a decade, professional educational organizations have been urging school systems to adopt such policies, but not all have done so. The attitude that "it can't happen here" still prevails throughout the land despite the ever-increasing number of schoolbook protest incidents.

No one in Tell City, Indiana--nor the minister from Hawesville, Kentucky--completed a complaint form calling for a review of Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men. Nor did anyone sign a complaint form about Finding My Way, a textbook used in an elective sex education course for seventh and eighth graders. Instead, a small group led by a minister from a neighboring state protested the teaching of both books at the January meeting of the school board.

Steve Epley, the minister from Kentucky, presented the Tell City (Indiana) school board with a petition signed by approximately sixty persons. The Reverend Epley charged that the ninth grader was "required" to read Of Mice and Men. The minister then read this statement from a letter attached to the petition:

> When he refused to read the book, he was barred from English class and forced to spend the period in a small room by himself with a thicker book and no assistance from his teacher. We ask your help in our fight to clean up the garbage in Tell City High School's English department. We, as Christians, need to take a stand against Satan's attack upon the minds of our youth.

Robert Waters, the ninth grader's English teacher, answered the Reverend Epley's charges during the January meeting of the school board. He said that no student in the high school is ever "required" to read a given book and that the boy was assigned to read The Red Badge of Courage on his own in the English office during regular class time. Waters said the "small room" the Reverend Epley referred to is an English resource room that is about half the size of a conventional classroom.

Several days after the January meeting of the school board, the Reverend Epley wrote a guest column for the Tell City newspaper. He raised the specter of secular humanism with these words:

> I am very much concerned about the humanist teachings in our public schools.
>
> What is Humanism? It is religion without God. It is education without God. It is the condition of man as described in the Bible (Romans 1:28) "...they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. . ." and the results are indeed tragic.
>
> The Humanist is more dangerous than the atheist. At least, an atheist will come right out and say he doesn't believe in God. A humanist will say, "Yes, I believe there is a God, but...I also believe in evolution."
>
> The atheist is like a rattlesnake. He will make some noises before he bites you. But the Humanist is more like a boa constrictor. He will silently squeeze you to death with his Godless philosophies before you know what happened.

With those words, Tell City's school teachers joined the ranks of thousands who have been charged with "preaching the religion of secular humanism" in the public schools. And like the thousands who have been so charged, Tell City's teachers were unaware of the crimes they were allegedly committing against society. They did not attend a church called Secular Humanist--in fact, they could not find one in Indiana if they tried. They could not define the religion; nor could they state its major beliefs. Yet they were accused of spreading some ill-defined doctrine that prompted one minister in Tell City to call them "pagans and heathens" on a radio program. Another minister called school board members and the superintendent "rotten, stinking hypocrites who are spreading the religion of humanism through sex education."

Throughout the controversy in Tell City, it was obvious that the schoolbook protesters were using the terms secular humanism, humanism, humanist, and humanities interchangeably. It also became apparent that at least one of the school critics in Tell City based much of his thinking about textbooks on materials distributed by Norma and Mel Gabler through Educational Research Analysts in Longview, Texas. (More on the Gablers later.) That critic was also influenced by this definition of humanism which is distributed by the Gablers:

> Humanism is faith in man instead of faith in God. Humanism was officially ruled by the U.S. Supreme Court. Humanism promotes: (1) situation ethics, (2) evolution, (3) sexual freedom, including public sex education courses, and (4) internationalism.
>
> Humanism centers on "self" because it recognizes no higher being to which man is responsible. Thus there is much emphasis in public education on each child having a "positive self-concept." The child must see a good picture of himself. This eliminates coming to Christ for forgiveness of sin. It eliminates the Christian attributes of meekness and humility. Where does self-esteem end and arrogance begin?
>
> Such terms as self-concept, self-esteem, self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-fulfillment, self-realization, self-understanding, self-actualization, body awareness, etc. are frequently used. All leave the students occupied primarily with themselves and this is wrong. There are others to consider. Self-centered persons are seldom an asset to themselves, to their friends, family or country.[2]

That definition has been expanded several times to include more targets of the schoolbook protesters. For example, the Reverend Tim LaHaye, one of the founders of the Moral Majority, devoted a 27-page chapter of The Battle for the Public Schools to prove that secular humanism has all the markings of a religion. In that chapter and others, he attacks these "hallmarks" of secular humanism: the look-say method of reading, values clarification, death education, global education, evolution, sex education, total reading freedom, the "negation" of Christianity in the schools, and socialism—among others.[3]

But regardless how much is written about secular humanism and how many definitions are circulated, it is interesting to note that few persons in local school districts can define secular humanism even though they may have charged that it is corrupting youth. One organizer of parent protest groups defined secular humanism on a national television show as "the philosophy of anything goes."[4] Another critic of the public schools told a school board that humanism is the "belief that if something feels good, do it." Others believe that the Supreme Court established secular humanism as the religion of the public schools when it "removed God" from classrooms in the case of Abington v. Schempp. That belief is supported by Senator Jesse Helms, who wrote:

> When the U.S. Supreme Court prohibited children from participating in voluntary prayers in public schools, the conclusion is inescapable that the Supreme Court not only violated the right of free exercise of religion of all Americans; it also established a national religion in the United States—the religion of secular humanism.[5]

If Senator Helms' "inescapable conclusion" were true, does it follow, then, that if "voluntary" prayer were restored to classrooms, the religion of secular humanism would be abolished from the schools—if it could ever be conclusively proved that it was there in the first place? The confusion over definitions and inescapable conclusions does not deter the New Right from trying to prove, in Federal courts, that secular humanism is the religion of the public schools. Members of the New Right have brought the secular humanism charge to Federal courts twice, and on both occasions Federal judges dismissed the cases without a trial.

In the first case, Grove v. Mead,[6] Michael Farris, the former president of the Moral Majority in the state of Washington, sued a school district for refusing to remove Gordon Parks' The Learning Tree from the curriculum. Farris, who is also an attorney, charged that when the school board did not remove the book that it violated the first Amendment rights of the students by imposing upon them the religion of secular humanism. The judge dismissed the suit on the grounds that the plaintiffs had not presented sufficient evidence to support their allegations.

In the second case, Mozert et al. v. Hawkins County Public Schools,[7] Michael Farris, acting as legal counsel for Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America, filed the brief for a case that originated in Tennessee. Parents of children in the elementary and junior high schools of Church Hill alleged that the First Amendment rights of their children were violated when they were forced to study secular humanism as presented in the Holt, Rhinehart, Winston basal readers. The Federal judge dismissed the case without trial on the grounds of insufficient evidence to substantiate the charges. The case will probably be appealed since Concerned Women for America is raising funds to do so.

Essentially the same argument is repeated in the literature of the New Right organizations opposed to humanism and in the more than twenty books they use to support the allegation that secular humanism is the religion of the public schools. John Dewey and thirty-three other "liberal humanists" signed Humanist Manifesto I in 1933. B.F. Skinner signed Humanist Manifesto II in 1973. Since those two prominent educators, among others, signed the documents, it follows--goes the argument—that all educators subscribe to the tenets of the manifestos, which members of the New Right call the bibles of public school teachers. Since there is an American Humanist Association (AHA) that publishes articles about secular humanism and its goals, it follows--goes the argument--that America's public school teachers belong to the organization and read its journals. Finally, since the Supreme Court declared secular humanism to be a religion, the spreading of the doctrine of humanism in the public schools—the argument continues--is in direct violation of the First Amendment.

There are at least four flaws in that argument. First, probably no more than three percent of the public school teachers and administrators in this nation even know about—let alone have read--either Humanist Manifesto.[8] Second, hundreds of today's teachers know little--if anything--about John Dewey and his philosophy of education. Simply because a prominent educator calls himself a secular humanist, it does not follow that all who enter the teaching profession are secular humanists.

Third, the Moral Majority and other New Right organizations attribute great influence over education to the AHA, the publisher of the manifestos. But AHA has fewer than four thousand members, and only a relative handful of the nation's two million teachers and administrators even know about the existence of AHA—let alone call themselves members. Fourth, the Supreme Court did not declare secular humanism to be a religion. In the frequently cited case of Torcaso v. Watkins,[9] this footnote is included: "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others..." In a second case that is often cited,[10] there is a footnote referring to Torcaso. Two footnotes hardly constitute a Supreme Court declaration.

But the battle over secular humanism has only begun. Last August, Congress passed a math-science bill with an amendment on magnet schools assistance that was introduced by Senator Jeremiah Denton. Section 509 of that amendment reads as follows: "Grants under this title may not be used for consultants, for transportation, or for any activity which does not augment academic improvement, or for courses of instruction the substance of which is secular humanism."[11]

Shortly after the Reverend Epley denounced the humanists in Tell City, a small group of citizens began compiling objections to some of the materials used in the public schools. At the February meeting of the school board, the Reverend Reynolds condemned the school system for allowing students to play "Dungeons & Dragons" in classrooms. He questioned the educational value of the game and made reference to the Supreme Court ruling that no longer permits prayer in public schools. "And yet this game teaches children to pray to gods and they will receive power...magical power by praying to these gods," the minister said. He then showed the school board a picture which he said came from a book written by the founder of The First Church of Satan. The minister said that the picture "shows a nude lady lying on an altar, and this is part of their ritual as they worship Satan. You will find in one of the D&D ('Dungeons & Dragons') manuals a picture of the same altar with the same thing happening..."

The minister then expressed his fear that if children are exposed to such material in the game manual "they will pursue the interest and eventually wind up with the same pornography. We look at the pictures in the book and it shows nude women, which according to the Supreme Court is classified as pornography, and if that's acceptable in our public school classrooms then something's wrong."

In an interview published in the Tell City newspaper, several students took issue with the minister's statements. One student was quoted as having said: "The basic premise of the game is to overcome evil. It seems to me the minister was confused. He was confusing what the characters do in the game as opposed to what people do. He made some comments that were not entirely true...I heard him tell somebody he only bought the manual (a handbook for 'Dungeons & Dragons') that night. I think if he understood the game better he would have no grounds to be opposed to it."

Throughout the schoolbook controversy in Tell City, Superintendent William Wilson patiently explained that "Dungeons & Dragons" is played in a non-credit mini-course by students who elect the class. He also pointed out that no picture of a nude woman appears anywhere in the manual that accompanies "Dungeons & Dragons." He further explained--again and again--that no students are forced to take sex education; rather, they elect to take it and they must have parental permission to do so.

Three Catholic priests and four Protestant ministers sent a joint letter to Superintendent Wilson early in the controversy, expressing their support of the Tell City school system. Other groups in the community did the same.

On February 16, the Reverend Reynolds announced that Norma and Mel Gabler, the most prominent schoolbook protesters in the nation, would appear at a textbook rally at the National Guard Armory in Tell City at the end of the month. Illness forced Norma to stay at home in Longview, Texas; consequently, Mel was the principal speaker. During the rally the Reverend Reynolds announced that he would invite Phyllis Schlafly, Norma Gabler, and Madalyn Murray O'Hair's son Billy to speak at future rallies.

Approximately three hundred persons, including the Indiana chairperson of Phyllis Schlafly's "Stop Textbook Censorship Committee," attended the rally. Reporters estimated that at least one hundred persons were there to show their support of the school system.

During the major address at the rally, Mel Gabler attacked the religion of secular humanism, sex education, "Dungeons & Dragons," and textbook in general. He read examples of "objectionable" material from a variety of textbooks, including one that he or his wife nearly always point to during their many speeches and television appearances. It is a fifth grade social studies textbook which they call an American history text. It has been out of print for nearly a decade and it never captured more than four percent of the market, but the Gablers still read from it in nearly all of their appearances, leaving the impression that the book is taught everywhere. Their major objection to that specific text is that it devotes slightly more than six pages to Marilyn Monroe, only a paragraph to George Washington, and "no mention of Martha." Norma Gabler frequently tells her audiences: "In Texas, we're not ready to have Marilyn be the mother of our country."

During the rally, Mel Gabler cited many passages in textbooks--only one of which was used in Tell City--to illustrate his belief that many of today's textbooks are dangerous because they promote evolution as unquestioned scientific fact, situation ethics, sex education, world citizenship, and socialism. To prove how dangerous textbooks are, he made these statements, among others:

> Most of your civil government books and many of your history books make government control seem very good, very needed, very important until you soon get the idea that government is the salvation, government is the answer. But when you go to the ultimate of that, you have what Hitler had in Germany. But that's all that was--government control. We see a national resurgence away from this, but our textbooks are still pushing for the very thing. For instance...to show you another bias, very few of our textbooks would be displeasing to somebody like Senator McGovern, Senator Javits, Senator Kennedy--somebody like that. None of them present the viewpoint of Ronald Reagan.
>
> ***
>
> Most of your textbooks are very favorable to world government--more favorable than they are to our own country.
>
> ***
>
> If you teach human sexuality without teaching virtue, purity, chastity, and abstinence, you reduce human sex to the animal level, and I guarantee you, your sex ed courses (in Tell City) are taught on the animal level because that goes right back to this world view that considers man is an animal.

Shortly after Mel Gabler noted that students in Tell City are forced to take sex education, he had to retract that statement when he was informed that sex education is actually an elective course. But he did accuse the school corporation of teaching "frills not skills," and he stated emphatically that standardized test scores in Tell City had declined steadily.

The superintendent, school board members, teachers, and administrators refuted the charges of Mel Gabler and others during the March meeting of the school board. Test scores have risen—not declined--the audience was told, and evidence was offered to support that statement. The basics are stressed in regular academic courses; "Dungeons & Dragons" is played only in a non-credit, elective mini-course. No student is required to take sex education; parental consent is required before a student may take the elective course.

At the beginning of the March meeting, Superintendent Wilson explained that the entire meeting would be devoted to the charges made during the January and February board meetings, as well as to the allegations made on radio programs, in newspapers, and at the rally. At the conclusion of the three-hour session, Anthony Pappano, president of the school board, read a statement in which he charged that the protesters used questionable tactics to protest the books. According to Pappano, the school critics did not follow the procedures for objecting to books; rather, they used the media and the rally to distort the truth and to make false and libelous statements. He promised that future school board meetings would not be used "as a forum by self-righteous groups to promote their personal beliefs. There will be no further discussion by the board on the topic of censorship until all interested parties have followed the established procedures of this school corporation." Finally, Pappano warned that if the protesting group persisted in using its present tactics and if it continued to make false and libelous statements about the school system and its employees, "we are prepared to take any and all legal action necessary to defend the constitutional rights of individuals associated with this corporation, including the educational rights of our children."

Tell City is quiet now. The Reverend Reynolds did not schedule additional rallies featuring prominent schoolbook protesters. In fact, the minister closed his school and left the community. The superintendent, teachers, administrators, and school board members have returned to the task of providing a solid education for the youth of Tell City. But the events of the winter of '82 will not soon be forgotten. Only a few citizens in Tell City will soon forget the name-calling, the distortions, the twisted facts, and the charge that the school system was preaching the religion of secular humanism. Few people in the community understand that charge and why it was made. Most do not know what the religion is; most do not care to know; most only hope that similar charges will never again be made against the school system and its teachers.

NOTES

1. The summary of the Tell City schoolbook controversy is based on Edward B. Jenkinson's "The Tale of Tell City: An Anti-Censorship Saga," (a discussion paper published by People for the American Way, May 1983, pp. 1-15), and on Edward B. Jenkinson's "The Censorship Tale of Tell City," Indiana English, Spring 1983, pp. 21-28.
   Sources I used to report the Tell City controversy included cassette tapes of all of the proceedings of the January, February, and March meetings of the school board. Also, tapes of the Tell City book rally and tapes of two radio broadcasts critical of the school system. Also, letters from, and an interview with, Superintendent Wilson, and letters to him from local citizens. Finally, clippings from area newspapers (Tell City News, Evansville Press, and Louisville Courier-Journal) for January, February, and March of 1982.

2. Mimeographed sheet included in a packet sent to a concerned parent by Educational Research Analysts.

3. Tim LaHaye, The Battle for the Public Schools. Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming Revell, 1983, pp. 36-42, 71-97, 173-202, 203-226, 227-238.

4. Janet Egan of Parents of Minnesota, Inc., on the MacNeil-Lehrer Report, February 20, 1980.

5. From the Introduction to Homer Duncan's Secular Humanism: the Most Dangerous Religion in America. Lubbock, Tex.: Missionary Crusader, 1979, p. 4.

6. From a mimeographed transcript of the decision in Grove v. Mead, United States District Court, Eastern District of Washington.

7. From the brief filed by Michael Farris in the United States District Court, Eastern District of Tennessee.

8. This figure is based on informal summaries I have conducted in speeches to teachers and administrators in 33 states.

9. Torcaso v. Watkins, Clerk, 367 U.S. 488 (1961).

10. United States v. Seeger, 380 U.S. 163 (1965f).

11. Congressional Record -- Senate, June 6, 1984, S6674. (The Senate passed the bill in June; the House passed it in August.)

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MONTELLO, WISCONSIN - A CASE STUDY IN CENSORSHIP

by
Lee Burress

Montello, Wisconsin, is a small town about fifty miles north of Madison. The town is north of the best farming region in the state, but there are prosperous dairy farms in the vicinity, along with Christmas tree plantations, some tourist resorts and a considerable number of homes of retired persons who have built on nearby lakes or in the pleasant pine woods.

During the 1979-80 school year a student checked out four books by Judy Blume, including Then Again, Maybe I Wont; Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret; and Deenie. Apparently because of a decision by the student's parent, the books were not returned. The school superintendent asked the district attorney for assistance in retrieving the books. When the district attorney was informed that the value of the books was about ten dollars a piece, he refused to take action and advised the school superintendent to seek redress in small claims court. For understandable reasons, no further action was taken.

In the 1980-81 school year, a challenge was filed against the book, The Magician by Sol Stein, which was used in an English class. The English teacher took the precaution of sending home with each student in the class a brief description of the book and a parental permission slip. Of the .twenty-five students, twenty returned signed permission slips; the teacher made an alternate assignment for the students whose parents refused permission to read the book, along with class time to discuss the alternate assignment. However, these precautions were not adequate, and a challenge was filed.

Excerpts of the most objectionable parts of The Magician were distributed in the Montello community by unknown persons. These excerpts, taken out of context, completely misrepresented the book. As a protest to the excerpting process by which the book was attacked, Gene Conrad, the newspaper editor, then distributed excerpts from the Bible, showing how that book could be misrepresented by such an irrational manner of dealing with books. He also announced that if The Magician were removed from use, he would file a formal challenge against the Bible.

The actions of the person who challenged the books and the defense of freedom of thought by Gene Conrad produced an outpouring of letters to the Marquette County Tribune, the Portage Register, and to some degree also to Milwaukee and Madison newspapers. This account is based on more than 100 newspaper clippings as well as oral reports by persons involved in the episode.

The protesting letters referred to the books as trash, filthy, UnAmerican, Unchristian, filled with obscenity, and pornographic. A somewhat typical letter from the Tribune for February 12, 1981, is as follows:

Dear Editor:

After reading various letters to the Editor defending the anti-Christ pornographer Sol Stein's The Magician, foisted upon public school children--it makes one wonder just how much lower morality can slide to be like unto Sodom and Gomorrah!

As Moses stated". . .Their foot shall slide in due time" (Deut. 32:35). If only those do-gooders were so ready to defend prayer in our schools and the Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag instead of a smutty book like The Magician authored by an anti-Christ "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. . .Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and the commandments of men, that turn from the truth" (Titus 1:11, 13 and 14).

This is another prime example where an unassumable minority foists immorality common to their ilk upon an impressionable majority. Jesus warned of them, "It were better for Him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and He cast into the sea, than that He should offend one of these little ones" (Luke 17:2). As it now appears--there will be a shortage of millstones--and standing room only at the bottom of the sea.

signed______.

Not all letters struck an anti-semitic note in attacking the book. A more common theme was objection to the book's so-called bad language and supposed sexual frankness. There was also objection to the book because of its criticism of the American legal system and because of its supposed negativism.

The school had in existence a carefully thought out review procedure. The review committee consisted of a group of persons, a majority of whom were local citizens, not staff members of the school. The committee was appointed by the school board after recommendation by the school superintendent. The committee was in existence before the challenge was filed.

After reviewing the book, the committee recommended by a vote of 5-2 that the book be retained in use, and the school board accepted the recommendation after what was reported in the press as a somewhat contentious public meeting.

One news report stated that the discussion lasted "nearly ninety minutes and was punctuated by shouting, catcalls, and scripture reading from the Bible." (Madison State Journal, February 10, 1981).

In February, 1981, shortly after the decision was made to retain The Magician, ten persons came to the school libraries and checked out 33 books, according to The Marquette County Educator Volume No. 1, March 1981, p. 1. They reportedly had a list from which they searched for titles in the school libraries. They were unwilling to explain the source of the list. The school district had at that time no policy concerning the use of books by citizens, and the adults were allowed to check the books out.

A perhaps atypical feature of the Montello affair was that one member from the school telephoned a member of the Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Coalition. The staff member reported that the books had been checked out and that there were allegations that they would not be returned. The 33 books were:

BOOKS CHECKED OUT FROM LIBRARY
OF MONTELLO HIGH SCHOOL
2/16/81

Abortion Rap - Diane Schulder
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl
The Baby Broker - Lynne McTaggart
Catch 22 - Joseph Heller
The Catcher in the Rye - J.D. Salinger
The Great Gatsby - F. Scott Fitzgerald
Growing Up Absurd - Paul Goodman
Hard Feelings - Don Breder
Jamie - Jack Bennett
Legislated Learning - Arthur E. Wise
No Bed of Roses - Joan Fountaine
Nobody Knows My Name - James Baldwin
The Outsiders - S. E. Hinton
Rape: The Bait and the Trap - Jean Scott MacKeller
Richie - Thomas Thompson
The Rights of Students
Runaway Teens - Arnold Madison
Shockwave Rider - John Brunner
The Teenage Body Book - Charles Wibbelsman
To Hell with the Kids - Gruhlke
When the Legends Die - Hal Borland

BOOKS CHECKED OUT FROM MONTELLO'S
FOREST LANE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2/16/81

Adam's Daughter - Gertrude Samuels
Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl
Dave's Song - Robert McKay
Diary of a Frantic Kid Sister - Hila Colman
Mother's Guide Young Years Library - Thomas
My First Love and Other Disasters - Pascal
The Outsiders - S. E. Hinton
Run, Shelly, Run - Gertrude Samuels
Starring Sally J. Freedman as Herself - Judy Blume
Who Wants to be Alone - John Craig

Coincidentally, the Wisconsin Intellectual Freedom Committee was holding a meeting of its executive committee the next day, at Madison, Wisconsin. At that meeting, a short resolution was adopted deploring the withdrawal of the books. The resolution was telephoned to most of the important Wisconsin media, including newspapers in Madison and Milwaukee, the Associated Press, the state radio network news bureau, and several of the major TV stations in the state. At least twelve news media were informed of the Montello event. CBS, NBC, and other national media ultimately reported on this event.

While the WIFC did not know about the names of the persons who checked out the books, the press soon found out, and in a short time some of those persons found themselves being asked by TV and print news reporters why they had checked the books out and whether they intended to return them.

The publicity seemed to have been quite surprising to the ten persons involved in the incident, and not welcome. An interesting and important role in this event was played by Gene Conrad, then editor of the local weekly paper, the Marquette (County) Tribune. Conrad ran a series of editorials condemning the action of the persons who had checked out the books.

The book challengers, who called themselves the Concerned Citizens, announced that they would return the books and that they would use the school system's formal method of filing challenges against the books; ultimately they did file challenges against ten of the books.

The book controversy preceded a school board election, which was scheduled for April 7, 1981. Before the election, on March 7, 1981, the state radio station at Madison, Wisconsin, scheduled a debate on the Montello situation for the weekly Saturday morning two hour public forum.

The librarian of the high school, in her first year out of college, and the writer of this article were on the program, along with Bea Weiss, a member of the school board, and Charles Solterman, a candidate for a seat on the school board.

In the course of the two hour discussion at station WHA, Bea Weiss allegedly charged a biology teacher in the high school with advocating the use of marijuana. There is only one biology teacher in the Montello High School, and he ultimately brought suit over this allegation, with the aid of the Wisconsin Education Association Council, the local union to which most of the teachers belonged.

According to an article in the Milwaukee Journal, which appeared sometime after the events described above, a local citizen became quite concerned about this conflict and was instrumental in getting candidates he believed to be well qualified, and who would support the school's procedure for book selection to run for the school board.

At the election, the two procensorship candidates, Bea Weiss and Charles Solterman, were defeated by votes of about 1200 for the winners to 400 for the losers.

The challenged books were referred to a review committee composed of some school staff members and some citizens of the local community, with the local Methodist minister as chair. The committee recommended that The Magician continue in use.

An interesting feature of the conflict over The Magician was the role played by the publishers and author. I telephoned the publisher of the book to ask for legal assistance.

I was never able to talk to anyone at Dell except secretaries. No lawyer or person of managerial status would talk to me. I was finally, after several telephone calls, referred to Doubleday and Company, who, I was informed, now owned Dell and would make any decisions.

After repeated calls, I talked to an apparently very young and insecure lawyer at Doubleday: I told him about the conflict at Montello, that the book published by Dell, The Magician, was widely being charged with being obscene, and that excerpts out of context were being distributed in the community. I suggested that the company ought to assist the teacher who had selected the book and who needed support.

However, the Doubleday lawyer reported that his superiors would offer no help. Apparently teachers who select books from Dell or Doubleday can expect no help from that quarter.

When Sol Stein, the author of The Magician, learned of the attack on his book, he offered to send a paperback copy of the book to any household in the school district. One of the things that frequently happens when a book is challenged is that copies of the book get very hard to find. Many libraries have only one or two copies of a given title. The review committee probably gets all the available copies for their use. Such committees are frequently composed of seven to ten persons.

It is therefore difficult for the book to get wide distribution. It is not unusual for all the available copies of challenged titles to sell out in a given region. It was therefore both very useful and quite amusing that the author was willing to make the distribution he did.

One of the results of the distribution was illustrated on a national TV program devoted to the Montello case. A local housewife who was interviewed said that when she saw the excerpts from the book, she thought it was terrible that such a book was in use in the schools. But when she got a copy and read the whole book, she changed her mind and saw the excerpts in their context in the whole book were not objectionable. The book, taken as a whole (to quote Chief Justice Berger), was quite worthwhile.

There was some concern before the school board meeting at which the review committee was to report that there might be violence at that meeting.

One reason for this fear was the possibility that a Wisconsin group called the Posse Comitatus might be involved in the book controversy.

In the course of the WHA forum discussion of the Montello conflict, the moderator asked Charles Solterman if he was a member of the Posse Comitatus. He said that he was not.

However, an ad was placed in the Oxford, Wisconsin shopper by a local citizen advocating the views of the Posse. That was the same person who wrote the letter cited above attacking the books and advocating their removal. A number of citizens in Montello believe that the Posse generally supported the removal of the challenged books.

The Posse Comitatus (A Latin phrase meaning "the power of the county") is a Wisconsin group somewhat similar to the Ku Klux Klan. Representatives of the Posse deny connection with the Klan, but persons allegedly representing the Klan have been reported in Wisconsin newspapers as seeking connection with the Posse.

The Posse ad (which appeared in the Oxford Wisconsin Shopper's Newsletter for February 7, 1981) is clearly anti-semitic. It refers to Eisenhower as a Jew and to "Jew controlled news and traitors in all levels of government." It refers to the "Jew international banker," to the "Jewish master plan to destroy Christian America," and includes a host of other anti-semitic details. [Another Posse ad appeared in the Oxford

Shopper for February, 24, 1981.]

One rather disturbing feature of Posse thought and action is the importance of the threat of guns to defend Posse ideas and principles. Many Posse members are reported to have well supplied bunkers with guns and ammunition. There have been several conflicts between the police in Wisconsin and members of the Posse.

For these reasons, there was fear that the Posse members would come armed to the school board meeting. There were therefore several policemen in the audience when the report was made. While the meeting was very tense, no guns were displayed. At least one school member went to the police station after the meeting for an escort home. Other school board members were allegedly followed home by strange cars, down dark and lonely rural Wisconsin roads. There was, however, no overt violence.

The thirty-three books were finally returned, although ten were returned not to the school library but to the board members on the grounds that they were too objectionable to be in the school library.

One book was finally disapproved by the review committee: Hard Feelings by Don Brede; two books, Happy Endings Are All Alike by Sandra Scoppetone and Rape: The Bait and The Trap by Jean S. MacKeller were put on a shelf for restricted use until they can be replaced with better books on the same subject.

The school board meeting and the election brought this episode to at least a temporary close. It is doubtful if those persons who objected to the books have had their minds changed, but it was apparently made clear to them that they were in a minority.

Events that are as dramatic as at Montello have not occurred frequently in the United States. In Kanawha county, West Virginia, and in Warsaw, Indiana, somewhat similar events have occurred, but on the whole, these are infrequent occurrences.

Much less dramatic challenges to the use of books in the schools seem to occur with increasing frequency. Since 1966 I have carried out four national surveys of challenges to the use of the various media in the public schools. The respondents to these surveys report an increasing number of challenges, as the chart below shows:

Frequency of Report of Challenges

	1966	1973	1977	1982
Books	20%	28%	30%	34%
Periodicals	na	na	8.5%	17%
Films	na	na	7.5%	8%

Some persons argue that for a parent to object to a book, or periodical, or film used in the schools is not in itself censorship. The challenges do constitute pressure which in some schools at least erodes the willingness of the school to provide learning material for the student. A confidential respondent reported to me that after the Montello episode, a nearby school quietly removed The Magician and several other books from the school library. The removal was by the superintendent and the librarian. How many of those occurrences there were cannot positively be known but it has been obvious for several years, that when a book is attacked in one school, newspaper publicity makes the title well known, and the book is then challenged or quietly removed in a number of other places. Undoubtedly, that has hapened to Catcher in the Rye, Go Ask Alice, and many other books.

In addition to the quiet removal of books as a result of publicity, a significant number of books are challenged and removed through the schools' reconsideration processes. As a result of those challenges, a substantial number of good or relevent or great books are removed from use in the schools. If censorship is defined as removing a title from a recommended list, removing a book from classroom use, or removing a book from a library, much censorship occurs. Of the 48 most frequently challenged books in the 1982 survey that I conducted, approximately 54% of the time some form of censorship was exercised as reported in the chart beneath.

DISPOSITION OF CASES FOR MOST
FREQUENTLY CHALLENGED BOOKS, 1982

Title	Request Denied	Some Form of Censorship	Pending
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	3	2	2
Anthology of New York Poets		2	
Are You in the House Alone?		3	
Ball Four Plus Ball Five	1	1	
Bellvue is a State of Mind	1	1	
Black Like Me	1	1	
Brave New World	2	1	
Catch Twenty-Two	2		
Catcher in the Rye	10	8	1
Chocolate War	2		
Daddy Was a Numbers Runner		2	
Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test		4	
The Exorcist	2	2	
Forever	5	8	
Go Ask Alice	18	16	
Grapes of Wrath	3	3	
Hard Feelings	2	1	
Headman	1	2	
A Hero Ain't Nothing But a Sandwich		7	
If Beale Street Could Talk		3	
I Hate To Talk About Your Mother	1	2	
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings	1	1	
I, Pig	1	1	
It's OK If You Don't Love Me	1	5	
Johnny Got His Gun	2	1	
Killing Mr. Griffin	2		
The Learning Tree	2	3	
Lord of the Flies	1	2	
The Lottery		2	
Love Story		2	

Manchild in the Promised Land	1	2	
Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones	1	1	
My Darling, My Hamburger	4	1	
Native Son		2	
Nineteen Eighty-Four	1	1	
None of the Above	1	1	
All Books on the Occult	2	1	
Of Mice and Men	3	6	
Our Bodies, Ourselves	8	8	
Run, Shelley, Run	2	1	
A Separate Peace		1	
Sex: Telling it Straight	1	1	
Slaughterhouse-Five	2	4	1
Summer of Forty-Two		2	
Then Again, Maybe I Won't	1	2	
To Kill a Mockingbird	2	1	
A Way of Love, A Way of Life	1	1	
Winning	1	2	
Totals	95	114	4
Percentage	44.5%	53.8%	1.7%
Total Cases	213		

E. Spencer Parsons, recently retired professor of theology at the University of Chicago, discussed the effect of the moral majority movement on the public schools at the 1981 annual conference of NCTE. Professor Parsons compared the movement to remove allegedly pornographic books in the public schools to the prohibition movement. The prohibition movement began in the 1980's, culminated in the prohibition amendment, and did not come to an end until 1933. Professor Parosns suggested that in both movements a minority of passionate people deeply committed to a belief in their moral superiority, attempted to impose their own moral standards on the larger society.

If Professor Parsons is correct, we may expect that the current battle of the books may go on for two or three decades. Those persons interested in protecting the traditional right to read in the public libraries or school libraries had better gird up their loins for a protracted struggle.

University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

A HOT POTATO:
Information on Conscientious Objection to Military Service in Public Schools

by
Helen Horn

To my mind, a high school education should expose students to a variety of viewpoints and help them weigh the choices ahead. One choice that confronts many seniors in job-hungry southeastern Ohio is whether or not to enlist. In March 1984, encouraged by my local Quaker Meeting, I tried to make materials available to the guidance office at Alexander High School about alternatives to military service. I was branded a communist.

I had taught English at Alexander in the '70's and had a daughter in the sophomore class. The guidance office had a large rack of military recruitment brochures full of razzle-dazzle promises about job training, travel opportunities and self-respect. I asked the counselor what information they had on conscientious objection to military service (a legal Selective Service option based on moral or religious principles). He showed me an out-of-date leaflet in a file. I had along a Handbook for Conscientious Objectors and a brochure entitled "Join the People Who'll Never Join Today's Military." I suggested they might be added to the recruitment flyers in his display rack. He sent me to the superintendent who sent me to the board. I had hold of a hot potato.

I found out how hot it was at the board meeting. I had sent the five board members copies of the brochure and a cover letter. Sixteen members of the American Legion and the VFW were there with their parade hats on their heads. They had apparently seen the brochure. After I had made my request, they laid into me. They called me and my literature communistic. They told me to take my daughter out of their school district if I was so concerned about the offerings there. They suggested buying me a oneway ticket to Russia. The board president denied my request to raise a point of information and declared the discussion closed. Then the board voted unanimously not to display the materials at Alexander High School.

A reporter from the The Athens Messenger who was covering the meeting had worked with me closely, publicizing a project to bring local resource volunteers into classrooms around Athens County. She asked me afterwards what point of information I had been trying to raise. I explained that, in Illinois, a federal court judge has ruled that a school which permitted military recruitment information has to permit materials on conscientious objection as well. I also assured her that I had made my request out of religious conviction and as a teacher, not as an advocate of any particular political ideology. She wrote a very balanced news article about the confrontation. It was placed squarely in the middle of the front page, however, with a glaring headline: SCHOOL BANS 'COMMUNIST' MATERIAL.

From hindsight, I realize that the brochure I sent out to the board members was too outspoken to use in our community. It was published by the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) in Philadelphia, a city where seeking alternative service to the military is common. It lays its antirecruitment message right on the line:

> Does the military really have the job you want? Suppose the only job open for you was one in which the company had strict dress codes, still practiced racial and sex discrimination, took away your constitutional rights to free speech, wouldn't let you quit and could force you to kill. These are all true in the military.
>
> Some people join the military because they believe the United States has a responsibility to maintain troops throughout the world. Many don't join because they believe that they would only be used to defend the interests of a few people who hold power and wealth in America. Others feel that war or helping to prepare for war never achieves anything.

The young people quoted in the brochure are very direct: "Nothing's guaranteed in the military except that you belong to Uncle Sam." "No one should be learning to kill, but that's the military's biggest job." There are some very positive statements in the brochure: "I would want to be on the side of lifegiving forces; those which have a sense of community, sharing, creativity and solidarity." The overall impact, however, is critical and negative. I should have faced beforehand the extent to which respect for authority and for those who have died in battle dominates our community. I should have explored the superintendent's own reaction to the material and found alternatives before ever mailing it to the board members. And I should have mailed copies of the temperate and thorough Handbook for C.O.'s along with a more acceptable flyer. It would have cost $20, but in the interests of frugality, I undercut my efforts.

I continue to believe that the cause is just. Thanks to freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and the work of others who share my convictions, the cause has been carried forward. Spirited letters to the editor, pro and con, were printed for the next fortnight. Meanwhile the same reporter researched for three in-depth feature articles on the issue. They were based on interviews with my husband and me, the veterans, and the superintendent and board president. They all ran on the first page, with pictures of the people involved.

In our interview, David and I pointed out the irony that my veteran attackers were supposed to be defenders of democratic principles like freedom of choice. I connected my request to my teaching of advertising analysis at Alexander High, where the students had learned to question lavish promises. I clarified that if military induction is reinstated, kids who have scruples against killing may have a very short time to get together their case for C.O. status. They must have thought and read about it ahead of time to be prepared. I spoke about my religious conviction that people are meant to love each other and find solutions to their problems, not resort to killing.

The veterans said that religion should be taken out of the issue and was only a flimsy excuse for unAmerican threatening of the military. With "this kind of materials in schools, we might not have anybody fighting." They pointed out that C.O.'s could serve in the military as medics. One said "I sure don't want to live under the Russians. . .It's kill or be killed, and I'd rather it be them than us." Another said that if the coalition for conscientious objection gets its way it would be like opening up Pandora's Box. "What's to keep child pornographers and drug dealers and other 'free thinkers' from entering the school?" They vowed to combat the effort in any way they could.

The superintendent speculated that the effort might spread to other school districts. He said he would support the right of a religious C.O. to take such a stand, but that the material I had submitted was not based on a religious or moral foundation. He described it as "attempting to undermine the entire military establishment" and exhibiting "general distaste for authority."

A week later the same paper ran a picture story with spot quotes from five Alexander High School students. They responded to the question: "Do you think C.O. materials should be placed in the school along with other military information?" Four out of five thought they should, so that students could be informed if they wanted to be. The fifth said it didn't matter to him.

Meanwhile, an ad hoc group formed to think through how to deal constructively with the polarized issue. At the core of the group were members of the local Society of Friends who had proposed the effort in the first place. They staff a Draft Information Center and had purchased the materials. There were one or more members of the following churches: Lutheran, Episcopalian, Catholic, Methodist, Brethren and Unitarian, plus the American Civil Liberties Union, the United Campus Ministry, three local peace groups and a lawyer. We decided to prepare much expanded packets of materials, excluding the brochure which had precipitated the confrontation, and adding leaflets on community service job opportunities. We drafted a new cover letter signed by another Quaker who agreed to serve as spokesperson for the group. We found residents of the six school districts in the county to take the packets to the superintendents for their consideration.

The packets we assembled contained items in three categories: those for guidance counselors, those for school libraries, and those for display along with recruitment literature. For the guidance counselors we recommended the most recent description from Selective Service of the C.O. position, plus their definition of each classification, and a leaflet from the National Interreligious Service Board for C.O.'s (NISBCO) called "Counselling Conscientious Objectors." For libraries we recommended the Handbook for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO) and Words of Conscience (NISBCO).* The latter is made up of statements from many different churches about how they respond to members considering the C.O. position. It included statements by thinkers such as Tolstoy, Thoreau, Gandhi and Martin Luther King. We conferred with the American Civil Liberties Union before selecting it, mindful of the separation of church and public education. In their judgment, a resource book presenting the views of diverse churches and famous writers does not violate that constitutional principle.

For display we recommended a flyer from the American Friends Service Committee called "Thinking about Enlisting?" This clarifies some of the fine print in the enlistment agreement which recruits must sign, raises basic vocational questions, and suggests ways to get help in the job search. From NISBCO we included a worksheet called "What Do I Believe About War?" It helps potential C.O.'s search their souls by posing the questions they would have to answer for their draft boards. We also recommended flyers from the Peace Corps plus six churches, suggesting job opportunities in community service work around the country or overseas. (Such jobs generally pay maintenance stipends only, but provide valuable experience for young people.) All our materials were stamped with the address and phone number of the Athens Draft Information Center.

*CCCO, 2208 South St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19146; NISBCO, 550 Washington Bldg., 15th and New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005

Our coalition and this packet were described in two long feature articles published by the Athens News. The features also included a review of the sequence of events, further comments from the veterans and school board members, a lawyer's statement and the views of other school superintendents on how they might handle our request. The first article was illustrated by a rather scathing cartoon showing a school house in the shape of a military man's torso with the school bell hung in his head.

One veteran was quoted as saying, "Nowhere in the Bible will it tell you that all killing is wrong...You can love your enemy to death, but he'll blow your goddamned head off." Another said, about our coalition, "They don't believe in patriotism. They don't want to honor the flag and, in time of war, they wouldn't be willing to fight...They want to live here under the coattail of somebody else." One board member said he had not been aware at the meeting that I was making the request based on religious convictions. If she had made that clear, he said, "I might have looked at it a little differently." Another board member agreed, but thought "the place to teach religious objection to the military is in the church."

The reporter stated the coalition's view that since conscientious objection is a legal Selective Service position, it deserves to be publicized in the schools. He did summarize the opinion of a local lawyer who had researched Illinois federal court decision, however, and found that C.O. materials are not yet in the Chicago schools because the case is under appeal. The lawyer explained that Ohio schools would not be bound by an Illinois decision, in any case, and that most courts allow local school boards the freedom to operate as they see fit. It was this lawyer's view, nonetheless, that since Alexander High has allowed military recruitment publications to be displayed but not C.O. information, they are picking and choosing what draft options their students are exposed to. This could be challenged in the courts on First Amendment grounds.

A superintendent in another of the county's school districts was reported to be considering the formation of a review board to consider the coalition's request. It would be made up of a guidance counselor, one or more teachers, the school board and himself. Such a review board is part of the school policy when controversial issues surface, he said.

In May, a month after these articles came out, the Tri-County Joint vocational School superintendent announced that he was accepting the materials our representative had recommended. He based his decision on a board policy providing for opposing viewpoints on controversial issues. His Administrative Cabinet, made up of himself, the principal and other supervisory personnel, finalized the policy determination. It seems significant to mention that this superintendent had been urging support for a levy at the Alexander School Board meeting where the veterans had done their name calling.

In June another of the county's six systems, the Athens City Schools, agreed to accept the materials after a subcommittee of the board had studied them and made a positive recommendation. These two decisions were heartening, but in my own district things were still polarized. A full packet of the materials was made available to each member of the Alexander School board, along with one left in the high school office for community people to scruntinize. A coalition group met with the superintendent to discuss his reactions to them. He saw no problem with the materials for the guidance counselor and added that he had already updated the Selective Service information from the Mormon Church to which he belonged, (an omission we have pointed out to the editors). He said he intended to take no stand on the question this time and leave the decision entirely up to the board.

At their June meeting, the Alexander board members asked for more time to study the materials. The five coalition members ready to speak in support of them decided to wait until the board members were thoroughly familiar with the packets. At the July board meeting there was public discussion on the issue, with veterans again challenging coalition members. A Quaker draft counselor pointed out that at a recent forum in Athens the state Selective Service director had supported placing the materials in the schools. One board member said, however, that the majority of district people he had had contact with were against accepting the materials. The board president said, "If we put this material in (the school) we would have to accept material of any group in the name of religion. And that includes the Moonies, whatever you want. We could not keep them out." He asked if there was a motion to place the materials in the guidance office. No board member offered such a motion and the issue died.

In two other districts in the county, coalition representatives moved away during the summer and superintendents changed. The effort is being renewed in the sixth district this fall. With precedents set for both acceptance and rejection of these C.O. materials, it will be interesting to see how this school board decides.

In my view, the Alexander board chairman's fears were not justified. No one church position on conscientious objection to military service was being advocated. The community service job possibilities offered as alternatives to enlistment were sponsored by both Catholics and Protestants and by the government, through the Peace Corps. The materials were not rejected because the C.O. position is considered "radical" in my community. The board members were prevented from making an objective assessment of the materials by an outspoken faction. That faction was riled up because the literature I proposed questioned military authority and struck at the institutionalized violence in our society which has been hallowed by human sacrifice.

I realize now how important it is, in such controversial areas, to find literature that is constructive in its tone, no matter how justified negative criticism may seem to be. I realize how important it is to work closely with school officials, to explore their hesitations and offer alternatives. They are on the hot seats in their communities. If an issue becomes public, the media can educate the people about both sides, as they did very responsibly in this case. But school authorities will always be tempted to "represent the majority" rather than to stand up for the freedom of choice on which education in a democracy should be based.

New Marshfield, Ohio

CENSORSHIP: A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

(The author of the following article wishes to remain anonymous to protect those who were involved.)

CENSORSHIP ISSUE - FALL 1982

-- Male, 8th grade student objects to the class reading assignment, A Day No Pigs Would Die, by Robert Newton Peck.

-- Student objects on the grounds of inappropriate language, e.g. "bitch" and explicit descriptions of such events as the birth of a calf.

-- Superintendent, principal, and teacher decide that since the book is required reading for the class the boy will have to read the book and be responsible for all class assignments or be given zeros.

-- There was fear of establishing a precedent whereby parents could dictate what literature their child would and would not read.

-- The boy and his family chose the failing marks; consequently, he failed the nine weeks grading period.

-- Following the incident, the teacher and the superintendent were unwilling to let the issue rest. Within weeks, a policy and procedures for responding to objections, selection of materials, and alternate assignments was adopted.

CENSORSHIP ISSUE RISES AGAIN! - SPRING 1983

-- For the second time during the school year the same student and his parents challenged the classbook, Gentlehands, by M. E. Kerr.

-- One objection was again use of inappropriate language, e.g. "shit", "damn", "jackass", "marijuana", and "horney".

-- Another objection was the teaching of personal qualities, e.g. responsibility, which the parents thought should be taught at home and not at school.

-- Following the new policy, the teacher scheduled a conference between the parents, the student, the principal, and the teacher to discuss the issue. The purpose of the conference was to try to resolve the problems without filing a formal grievance .

-- At the conclusion of the conference, the father decided to file a formal grievance .

-- Following the grievance procedures, the student was assigned an alternative selection to the satisfactions of the teacher and the parents.

Parental and student objections to literature selections are not new or unique; it is also not unique that school systems and teachers are ill-prepared to deal satisfactorily with censorship issues. In this situation, educators, administrators, and the teacher assumed that a policy and procedures for material selection and alternatives were not necessary; and that their professional judgment on such matters would and should be unquestioned. Such naive and narrow thinking presented a display of administrative force rather than cooperative efforts between community and school. If a policy had previously been established, the teacher, principal, superintendent, student, and parents would not have been subjected to the stress, anger, and frustration of not knowing what to do when handling this controversial issue. As it was, all parties were subjected to emotional outbursts that could have been minimized or eliminated had a procedure and policy existed.

Teachers and administrators can no longer assume that their professional judgment will go unchallenged. In today's society parents care enough and are knowledgeable enough to questions materials and demand their rights for their child. Thus, policies and procedures dealing with material selections and alternatives become a task of maintaining the delicate balance of the rights and responsibilities of public education and the rights of hundreds of families within the system, each with their own set of values and educational standards.

To maintain this delicate balance it is not enough to have a policy and procedure typed and filed in a staff policy handbook. Teachers must take it upon themselves to be prepared to identify, analyze, and justify their reasons and justifications for teaching specific material. For example, in response to the language objections previously cited, it was important to explain that the language was used as a method of characterization - to show the character's lack of confidence and the need for a "crutch"; that class discussions allowed students to apply their knowledge through critical examination and evaluation of their own language usage; and that such critical thinking and evaluation is an integral part of teaching literature and is best taught in conjunction with relevant questions confronting today's adolescents.

Censorship is not limited to language usage. The parents in this situation believed that the school was infringing on parental rights by teaching the value of responsibility. Again it is important for teachers to identify, analyze, and justify the literary significance of themes studied in the classroom, and the extent to which they complement values taught in the home.

Written justification of materials is an invaluable tool at the time a book or other material is challenged. Such rationales can be given to principals, superintendents, board members, and parents as explanations of the significance of the work and how it corresponds with the school's curriculum. During a parental conference, written rationales can be the support a nervous and/or novice teacher needs to remind him/her that the material was selected using a knowledgeable and professional process. For assistance in writing rationales it is suggested that the following resources be utilized.

Collected Rationales: Taking a Stand Against Censorship, published by the Ohio council of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1984. Copies may be purchased from Judith Keck, Licking County Schools, Newark, Ohio.

. . . Books Our Children Read, This is a film showing teachers and parents working together to make book selections in Fort Frye High School. News Release. Contact person is Jim Creighton at Fort Frye High School.

Censorship problems are not only a sign of the times, but are here to stay. It's important to prepare a defense in advance. Appropriately written policies and procedures for material selection and alternatives plus written rationales are invaluable if school and community are to work together to create a positive learning environment.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM: A Casualty of Extremism?

by
SCOTT NUSBAUM, Attorney at Law

The battle lines have been drawn in public secondary education. On one front, the teachers are entrenched claiming their right to unrestricted academic freedom. On the other front stand the conservative social, religious, political and parental groups claiming the legitimacy of their interest in shaping the education of our youth. Shuttling between the fronts as the battles subside are school administrators and boards attempting to respond to community pressures within a framework which has been ill defined by the courts of this nation. Unfortunately, caught in the crossfire of this controversy are its intended beneficiaries: American students.

This war, if it is to continue, should be waged according to certain fundamental principles recognized by all participants.

1. Teachers are entitled to academic freedom.
2. The state has a legitimate interest in the education of its youth.
3. Parents maintain a greater interest in the education of their children than the state.
4. Students are entitled to the freedom to learn.

Simply and independently stated these principles appear constitutionally logical and harmonious. However, placed in the context of a specific school system which has proposed an act of censorship, they become inter-dependent and competitive. The pursuit of one interest may restrict the existence of another. Constitutional issues arise when the school board, as an arm of the state, seeks to restrict the individual rights of the teachers, students, or parents.

These four principles all represent constitutionally plausible positions. Teachers do, and should, enjoy academic freedom. This right emanates from the First Amendment right to freedom of speech and has been recognized in numerous federal court decisions. Similarly, the First Amendment guarantees students the academic freedom to learn. One can not meaningfully exercise the freedom to speak and associate unless he has free access to the marketplace of ideas. On the other hand, many states statutorily authorize local school boards to select, implement and supervise school curriculum and educational materials. Numerous courts have acknowledged this supervisory authority of the board. Furthermore, in most states, parents are legally responsible for the actions of their minor children. It is well established that parents enjoy a fundamental protection of the Fourteenth Amendment to select, within limits, what their children learn.

One flaw of reasoning which frequently fans the flames of this controversy is that the participants fail to recognize the rights of the students. Academic freedom not only includes the freedom to teach - but also the freedom to learn. Censorship equally impacts both freedoms. However, traditionally, dialogue exists between three interest groups in a censorship controversy to the exclusion of the students. 1. The community organization objects to certain material. 2. The school board reacts to that objection. 3. The teachers' organization reacts to the action of the board. Depending upon the action of the board, the teachers' organization may become ally or adversary. Frequently, each group may be represented by counsel to express their respective positions. However, rarely are the students of the school system represented in censorship discussions.

In the past two decades, federal and state courts have acknowledged the status of children as persons under the constitution. In the late 1960's, the United States Supreme Court recognized that juveniles were entitled to certain constitutional guarantees as criminal defendants. Furthermore, numerous state courts have recognized children as vital and interested parties in domestic actions. In many states, children now have the right to independently enforce and modify custodial and support decrees. In any censorship controversy, censorship groups, teachers, administrators and boards must recognize that the students of the system represent a vital interest group which is entitled to input and representation. considering the recent expansion of children's rights and the fundamental nature of the rights involved in censorship, a persuasive argument may be made in support of the appointment of a special counsel for students in censorship litigation or negotiation.

Historically, the United States Supreme Court has frequently utilized balancing tests in determining constitutional issues involving the interests of varied individuals or groups. The plethora of federal circuit court cases dealing with academic freedom have frequently attempted to valance the interests of the students' right to learn or the teacher's right to teach against the interest of the state in regulating education. A recent United States Supreme Court Case considered the varied interests of the parties involved. The court recognized the importance of control imposed by the school board but cautioned that the exercise of the power could not remain unfettered. The court continued to further express the close relationship between academic freedom and freedom of expression and indicated that the removal of books from a school library directly and sharply implicated the First Amendment rights of the students. The court went on to examine the intent of the school board in removing the questioned books. If the purpose of the board in removing books is to deny students the access to ideas which are repugnant to the board and this purpose is the decisive factor in the decision, then the board's decision is in violation of the constitution. However, a board decision to remove is not unconstitutional if it is based upon the premise that the books involved are "pervasively vulgar" or if the withdrawal decision is based upon "educational suitability" of the questioned books.

This two prong test will prove distinctly applicable to many censorship situations in public secondary schools. The majority of board decisions are initially prompted by the outside influence of a community censorship group. Frequently, the questioned materials do not become objectionable to board members until external persuasions are applied. However, it seems that the real intent of the board may be disguised in educational values. Actions initially prompted by unreasonable community pressure may later be tailored to educational suitability standards. In order to avoid the chameleon-like character of some boards, it may be wise to establish system wide policies on censorship to govern future situations.

It appears that the controversy involving censorship is far from exhausted. Attacks upon the content of public school libraries become more frequent and intense with the passage of each year. Censorship of numerous materials from public schools appears to be the cause celebre for certain conservative groups. These attacks range from the arguably justifiable to the absurd . At any rate, this movement harbors a sentiment, which, if uncontrolled could constitute a frontal assault on the freedoms of the First Amendment. Certainly, a parent has a right to control his child's education. Certainly, our children should not be exposed to lewd, lascivious, pornographic material at an early age. However, equally as certain, our children should not be exiled from the marketplace of ideas. The great danger in unrestricted censorship is that what may be controversial to father will not be to son. That determination rests with the son. Censorship destroys, or at least retards, that cognitive process. Only through exposure to all ideas is the son free to agree or disagree with the father.

The breadth of attack on our school libraries is disconcerting. Many censorship groups seem to fail to recognize degree. Too many censorship movements attempt across the board removal of material. Too many fail to respect the discretion of the teachers and administrators. Many educators defer the presentation of a subject matter until the students are able to intellectually absorb it. What is proper educational material for a seventeen year old may not be for a twelve year old. However, across the board removal denies all students the banned material regardless of their abilities or intellectual maturity. I do not want my children exposed to certain material at age twelve. However, I do not want them to graduate at age eighteen without such exposure.

Censorship is a volatile issue in our society. I am thankful for that. Many societies would not even allow it to become an issue. Most Americans cannot consider this issue without reflection upon their own personal educational experience. I was exposed to several imaginative and thought-provoking works by an enterprising and courageous English teacher in high school. Several of these works now appear on the censor's list. These works opened up a new world for the growing minds in my class. This world inspired an inquisitive atmosphere which was evident in the classroom. I have never again experienced such an atmosphere. I was given an opportunity by that teacher. I want that same opportunity available for my children. Even though I may not agree with the tenets and ideas expressed to my children in the educational process, this opportunity must not be denied by me or my neighbor. It is not our mind.

Chillicothe, Ohio

CENSORSHIP - BE PREPARED

by

LENI COOK

There are two kinds of censorship issues--those which involve the student's right to determine his own reading and those which involve the educator's right to select literature which will fulfill the instructional objectives of a particular course of study. In this article I shall deal only with the latter issue. My colleagues who are librarians confront the former with much efficacious argument.

As a classroom teacher I have been involved in district, school site, and department selection committees. I have seen censorship issues determine some choices, but, more often, I have seen teachers struggle to find meaningful reading for their students, reading which allows the student to concentrate on the learning objective rather than the use of expletives or sexually explicit language.

I have heard teachers say that they do not wish to restrict in any way what students select to read "on their own time," but they do not want to base curriculum on student selected literature. I agree and have rarely given students much say in what I require as class-wide reading. I do allow a wider range of literature for what I call "outside reading," but there are controls there also. And, up to this point in time, I have never had to deal with a censorship issue within my classroom. Perhaps I have been lucky, but I don't really think so. My reading choices for senior high level students include many of the books that are censored from schools and districts throughout the United States--Of Mice And Men, Huckleberry Finn, Brave New World, and To Kill A Mockingbird.

I believe that I have not had to deal with censorship issues in my classroom during the past twenty years because before I assign any book I do two things. I provide a rationale for the teaching of that text and I send the rationale home with the students in the form of a letter to parents regarding the class and the literature required (A sample of part of the letter sent home to parents of American Literature, Regular Track students, follows this article). I also discuss with the students the various reasons why the piece of literature is considered controversial and, at the end of the use of the work, ask them to either defend or reject the text as proper for study in the context of the class. Students know that their grades are not based on agreeing with my choice, but rather on the logic that they employ in answering this question. I have changed my curriculum when students have suggested that the reading choice did not "measure up," but students have never cited censorship issues as criteria for rejection.

As a department chair, I have had to deal with two instances where parent complaints about literature selected for class readings reached the school principal. In the first case, the teacher used Tom Wolfe's The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test in an honors level sophomore class. It was not a choice with which I was comfortable, but the teacher, who was respected greatly by faculty and students, wished to use it and there were funds to purchase a class set. After the semester was over, grades out, and many of the staff off on vacation, I had a call from the principal, asking me to come to school and meet with the parent of one of the students in the honors class. At issue was the use of Wolfe's book, or so the parent said. Before the meeting, I quickly read over the text and saw what would probably be the crux of the complaint. There were language and situation problems, especially on three specific pages. I was not sure just what the principal would do, but I felt that the book was not necessary to the class and would recommend that it not be used as required reading at the sophomore or junior level, no matter what track the class was on. I never had to make that recommendation. The meeting really was about the grade that the student had received in the class. The parent was using the text, which he skimmed through, as evidence of the teacher's "incompetence" to correctly evaluate his daughter's work during the semester. He wanted her grade changed; removal of the book from the honors curriculum was not raised once during the meeting. The parent brought no evidence of improper grading on any papers; the roll book grades averaged out to the grade that the student had received, but he wished the grade changed because the teacher had used "scurrilous" material in the class. The grade was not changed. The teacher decided to take the Wolfe book out of the sophomore honors curriculum and the department placed the book in the senior supplemental category where it resides today. This happened fifteen years ago. There has been no other controversy over this book at the school.

Two years ago a junior high in West Virginia banned Huckleberry Finn. The junior high was named after Mark Twain and the action made the national press. In Los Angeles, as there must be in many towns, we have a Mark Twain Junior High School also. And our high school requires that Huckleberry Finn be studied in junior literature classes. That year one of the teachers who taught juniors was an intern, teaching on her own for the first time. She became the target of one family's effort to challenge the school's curriculum. When the principal asked me to talk to this teacher about the complaint he had had concerning her choice of novel, I assured him that it was not her choice, but rather a department requirement. He said that the book was being challenged for two reasons--it presented family life negatively and it was anti-black. When I talked with the teacher, I found that the student whose mother had made the complaint was not doing well in the class and refused to even begin to read the novel. Since the book was required, no substitute could be used and the student was in danger of failing the class. As a part of my duties as department chairperson, I observe and informally counsel non-tenured teachers in the English department. I made arrangements to have my class covered so that I could observe in the class where the student was enrolled. The class was reviewing a section of the book, giving examples of courage shown by various characters, mainly Huck and Jim. When a student would give an example, the teacher would read that section aloud. The student whose parent had made the complaint was trying to disrupt the discussion whenever she could, but the class ignored her as did the teacher. I noticed that many of the passages which were cited during the period contained Huck's use of the word "Nigger" to describe Jim. Although I am sure there was no conscious intent to emphasize that word in her reading, this young blond teacher was reading aloud to a class which was over fifty per cent black. I wondered at her choice of teaching strategy and suggested other review methods at the conference which followed my observation. The meeting with the parent was again enlightening. First the principal and I assured the parent that the controversy over Huck Finn at Mark Twain Junior High was taking place in West Virginia, not in Los Angeles. I began to tell her about the rationale for using the book with the junior literature classes, but she was not interested in hearing anything from me. She wanted her daughter's midquarter grade raised, basing her argument on, yes, improper teaching, i.e. the use of Huck Finn.

I could not claim deja va; this was a different principal and a different book. The principal give her the forms which our district has developed to challenge a book on the District Authorized Textbook List, and we heard no more. But there were other consequences which were more tragic. The teacher began to have emotional problems; she started a series of absences which culminated in her resignation just after the Easter break. She decided that she wanted nothing to do with teaching; there was too much stress. And we had problems finding someone who would take the program until the end of the year. The students suffered with substitutes and it was not satisfying for any of us.

Censorship operates best as an insidious, hidden evil. When brought out into the open or prepared for carefully, it can be only a paper tiger. We cannot be afraid to prepare for and confront censorship; it won't just go away. We can educate those in our classes by giving them a framework for judging works of literature and hope that their mature judgment will allow them to acknowledge the right of all readers to make choices. One of my favorite professors in college told me that the way to judge whether my children were old enough to read a certain work was to see if they could read it without underlining the so-called obscenities. If they could do that and not make "tee-hee" references to certain sections, then they were mature enough to understand the author's theme. And if they couldn't? Well, they read it anyway and little harm would be done. He felt that the act of "banning" the book would just make it more important and more necessary to read.

Perhaps I should have prefaced this article with the statement that I teach in a large metropolitan area where there are lots of issues crucial to the very existence of our citizenry; luckily educational censorship is not high on the priority list at this time. But, because someday it could and more probably will be, I shall continue to be prepared to confront and combat it when and wherever it creeps into the classroom, the school, my students' lives, or mine.

Part of the letter sent home to parents of American Literature, Regular Track students:

In American Literature, students study the writings of a cross-section of our country as well as a representative sample based on chronology. Within each time focus, the various literary genres are reviewed and sampled...The required textbook for the course is The United States in Literature, Medallion Edition, supplemented by the The Crucible by Arthur Miller and the three novels listed below. Students also will be required to complete one project based on a teacher-approved novel of his/her choice. The assigned novels for this semester are Huckleberry Finn by Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), My Antonia by Willa Cather, and To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee. These supplementary works are carefully selected as representative of various aspects of American culture. Each represents a shift in our country's values. All three novels are told from one person's point of view--a young person. Each book reflects this person's struggle to find purpose and value in his/her life, sometimes in difficult and dangerous circumstances. Both the novels and the play have excellent examples of the use of basic and sophisticated literary devices which are fundamental instructional objectives of the Los Angeles Unified Schools' course outline for American Literature.

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WRITING RATIONALES: WHY AND HOW

by
Lois Spencer

The upsurge in censorship activity makes it essential that teachers be able to defend their selection of classroom materials. Written rationales for works in question offer well-stated arguments why a book or play deserves inclusion in the curriculum and explain just how a work may be used to advantage in the English or Reading Class. Rationales for several popular titles are available already. One excellent source is Collected Rationales: Taking a Stand Against Censorship (Judith Keck, Editor, O.C.T.E.L.A., 1984). Another is the Connecticut English Journal's Fall 1983 edition, Rationales for Commonly Challenged/Taught Books.

Teachers may benefit even more from writing their own rationales for the books they plan to use. A personally written rationale is evidence of a teacher's professionalism and forethought in choosing literature for the class. The scrutiny necessary in creating a rationale often shows up flaws or strengths in a work which might otherwise escape the teacher and therefore better equip him/her for the classroom or the censorship area.

Collected Rationales offers an excellent format which may serve as a model for rationale writing. A less structured presentation may also be made, but while the form can vary, certain features should be included in most rationales, among them a synopsis of the work, suggestions for classroom use, reasons for using the book or play, and potential problems which might be encountered through objections or in presenting it to certain groups or individuals.

In the synopsis, highlights of the storyline and main characters should be brought out. While length is open here, it often requires two or more paragraphs to express the gist of a full-length work. In this opening section of a rationale for Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, the plot is summarized, Montag introduced, and a significant point emphasized which the casual reader might miss.

> In Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury presents a futuristic world where firemen start fires, burning books simply because they are books and the houses where they are hidden. Guy Montag is a firemen who, until he meets his seventeen-year-old-neighbor, Clarisse, has never questioned his profession. Burning books is a job--and it's the law. When Clarisse asks if he is happy, Montag at first laughs but then begins to wonder--is he? Montag's wife Mildred, firmly addicted to the make-believe world of the "living walls"--huge television screens which literally surround the viewer with entertainment--has become a stranger. She draws what little life she has from the screens and from the radio "seashells" which she wears in her ears, even at night.
>
> A series of events brings about a change in the way Montag views his

> society. Mildred's suicide attempt, the burning of a woman who refuses to leave her home and her books, Clarisse's disappearance, and Montag's own fascination with the books he is sent to destroy, all work together to bring him to a point of rebellion. Professor Faber, who remembers when people first turned away from books and allowed them to be outlawed, befriends Montag. Fire Captain Beatty becomes suspicious of Montag's changed attitude and eventually orders Montag's own house and the books he has secreted away, destroyed. In desperation, Montag turns his fire nozzle on Beatty, killing him. The Mechanical Hound, a sophisticated tracking and extermination device, is set loose on Montag, who flees the city and becomes the leader of a band of outcast book lovers who have committed passages of literature to memory. A global war which has been threatening, begins.
>
> Montag and his fellows watch from the distance as their city is leveled.
>
> Significantly, Bradbury stresses in his novel that books alone aren't all that's missing from Montag's world and that getting them back won't solve society's problems. The destruction of books is only a symptom of a larger illness--that of a society which feeds on artificial values and hides from grim reality in showy electronic displays.

Ways a novel can be used effectively and which groups will benefit should be included also. It's important to consider the author's tone and possible emotional impact on different age and ability groups. Since a novel which is understood as social satire by mature students might be taken literally by those younger or less able ones, rationale writers may include alternative works which can replace one that just doesn't "fit" certain readers, and while intrinsic uses generally receive the focus, extrinsic uses may be mentioned as well. For example, while adolescent fiction often serves well in the classroom, these novels may be recommended as outside or optional reading.

This second part of the rationale for Bradbury's novel offers ideas for use in the curriculum as well as age groups for which it seems especially well suited:

> While Bradbury's novel may be studied as science fiction, it may also be analyzed from a societal standpoint. It could follow other works which deal with repression and mind control, such as 1984. Juniors and seniors can benefit from Fahrenheit 451 as a critical look at today's values. Since thirty years have passed following the novel's publication, students might be able to draw parallels between Montag's world and changes which have taken place in our society over three decades. I recommend this novel for the older student because an analysis of it calls for higher level thinking and reasoning abilities and a possible evaluation of society which younger readers may not be ready to make.

A teacher obviously believes in a book's worth or he/she wouldn't want to share it with students. Reasons why the work is recommended may pose no problem; however, they should be stated clearly. The sensitive writer views his/her audience as fair minded and intelligent and avoids jargon, double-talk, or moralizing. Possible objections to a work may be dealt with directly or indirectly, but the rationale must never fail to rely on reasonable argument.

This third and concluding section of the rationale for Fahrenheit 451 focuses on society's need to be aware of creeping ignorance and complacency - those handy tools of repression. This part deliberately echoes Bradbury's intention:

Although set in the future, this novel addresses problems of immediate concern to seventeen and eighteen-year-olds. Should there be control over how we live, what we think, believe, and read? Who should set controls, how should they be regulated, and what will be sacrificed in the process? Young adults must be making active decisions about the kind of world they want to live in. Many, like their parents, are complacent. Others are vaguely dissatisfied, and still others frustrated. Bradbury's book is about as subtle as an onslaught of cold water, but its message is imperative: Either we make active decisions to keep personal freedom alive and preserve the dignity and discoveries of our race or we lose it all.

The greatest value in teacher-written rationales may lie in the time and effort it takes to prepare them. Facing a would-be censor who objects to Fahrenheit 451, the teacher who has conscientiously rationalized its use, understands and perhaps can convey Bradbury's concern that our whole system of freedom will collapse if special interest groups continue to diminish the range of experience available to our people.

Bradbury's own words are a chilling reminder of why we as teachers choose to keep the minds open:

> ". . .The books were burned first by minorities, each ripping a page or a paragraphs from this book, then that, until the day came when the books were empty and the minds shut and the libraries closed forever."[1]

Fort Frye High School

Beverly, Ohio

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[1] Ray Bradbury, Fahrenheit 451 (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), "Author's Afterword," p. 182.

A FORMAT FOR RATIONALE WRITING

by
Judith Keck

While no specific format is required, sometimes a writing task of this kind is easier if broken into smaller parts. This format is used by the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts in their booklet, Collected Rationales: Taking a Stand Against Censorship.

Title:

Author:

Grade/Course Taught:

Building/District:

I. Brief plot summary.

II. Teaching objectives for this book.

  A. Literary (Valued characteristics)

  B. Psychological (Vicarious experiences)

  C. Pedagogical (Universal themes)

III. Changes in students' skills, attitudes, behavior if objectives are met.

IV. Problems of style, theme, topic, student interest that exist if using this book.

V. How problems can be overcome.

VI. Reputable sources that have recommended this book. (For example, School Library Journal, NCTE, Horn Book.

HOW CAN I LOCATE REPUTABLE SOURCES THAT HAVE RECOMMENDED A SPECIFIC TITLE?

Many public and university libraries have a reference tool called Book Review Index. This is a good place to start, beginning with the year a specific title was first published. As the title is reprinted and published in paperback, indexes from succeeding years may also carry additional reviews and evaluations of a particular work. Many publishers are quite helpful in providing reviews of specific titles.

ARE THERE MODELS OF RATIONALES IN PRINT?

Here are two sources of Rationale Models:

- Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts
  c/o Judith Keck
  Licking County Schools
  20 South Second Street
  Newark, Ohio 43055
  $1.00 per booklet; includes 10 rationales. Checks payable to OCTELA.

- Connecticut Council of Teachers of English
  Box 2211
  Enfield, CT 06082
  $5.75 per booklet; includes 25 rationales. Checks payable to CCTE.

Licking County Schools
Newark, Ohio

RATIONALE FOR CHERNOWITZ!

by Judith Keck

Chernowitz! Fran Arrick, large or small group for grades 8-12. Possible read aloud (see IV). Recommended for readers at all ability levels.

Summary - Bobby Cherno had not given his being Jewish much consideration until Emmett Sundback made his ninth-grade year miserable. Not only did he call Bobby names, but he marshalled Bobby's friends as well as other kids at school and in the neighborhood against Bobby. Bobby became a social isolate. Bob's parents are concerned about his isolation but he refuses to tell them about its basis or to let them interfere in any way. Emmett's assaults grow increasingly harsh until Bobby devises a plan to pay Emmett back. Bobby's plan is clever, devious, and well-executed but Bobby finds no satisfaction in his attempt to repay Emmett. In fact his guilt finally allows him to share the whole story with his parents and they in turn are able to provide an experience for the whole school that shows prejudice in its true light.

I. Teaching Objectives

1. Literary - This novel uses the first person narrator to its best advantage. The reader gets inside Bobby Cherno and feels his growing frustration and victimization during the first half of the novel.

   The reader understands Bobby's determination to solve his own problem without the interference of adults. He becomes increasingly aware that Emmett Sundback will not change but will forever seize the opportunity to victimize others if they let him.

2. Psychological - Bobby Cherno was a victim because of a certain kind of uniqueness and our students have likewise been "in" or "out" based on their own uniqueness. Athletics, grades, possessions and physical appearance have all been discriminating factors in our students' lives and they will be able to identify with Bobby in this circumstance. Bobby's techniques for coping and finally effecting some change will provide material for important discussions.

3. Pedagogical - This is a novel about decisions; some good, some bad. It's about solving problems as your own person without seeking help from others and it's about a growing awareness of the adult world where things are not always as they ought to be. This novel depicts an adolescent with real problems and admirable strengths for dealing with them.

II. Changes in students' skills, attitudes, behavior if objectives are met.

1. Because a first person narrator is used, students will identify those things we know about Bobby Cherno that we would not know if a third person narrator were used. Students will be able to show the increasingly threatening nature of Sundback's attacks on Bobby.

2. Students will compare themselves to Bobby describing times when they were outside a group and explain how they overcame their situation.

3. Students will discuss Bobby's plan for repaying Emmett and determine why he felt no satisfaction once the plan was executed.

III. Problems of style, theme, topic, student interest that exist in this novel. The first half of this book is extremely painful to read. Bobby is victimized again and again until the reader wonders how much more of this they can stand to read. But the second half is satisfying because Bobby's solution to the problem and his ultimate dissatisfaction with it is so suitable to his character.

The language in a couple of instances is brutal. Bobby is called a "Jew bastard" not by Emmett but by one of his friends.

IV. How problems can be overcome. The pain inherent in this novel is eased by the author in the second half of the book. It's important to know the readers with whom you match this title as the first half may be too intense if not guided by the teacher or librarian.

Yes, I'd read it aloud although not the first group experience of the year. Be apprised that the experience will be most intense for both you and your students but unforgettable.

The language is most brutal not in its appearance on the page but in the delivery of the lines by a person who was once Bobby's close friend.

V. Reputable sources that have recommended this book:

The Horn Book Magazine
The Reading Teacher
English Journal

Licking County Schools
Newark, Ohio

NCTE

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801

STATEMENT OF CENSORSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

I. Statement

Teachers of English language arts must make daily decisions about materials and methods of instruction, choosing from increasingly broad and varied alternatives in order to serve students who are themselves increasingly diverse, both linguistically and culturally. Guidelines help teachers of English language arts to make those decisions. NCTE advocates and supports guidelines that help teachers avoid censorship. NCTE opposes censorship wherever it appears.

II. Distinctions between Censorship and Professional Guidelines

Censorship and guidelines sometimes appear similar because both involve selection from myriad alternatives. However, censorship and professional guidelines may be distinguished one from the other. Whereas the goal of censorship is to remove, eliminate or bar particular materials and methods, the goal of professional guidelines is to provide criteria for selection of materials and methods.

III. Censorship Distinguished from Professional Guidelines: Examples

Examples of Censorship	Examples of Professional Guidelines
1. **Exclude Specific Materials or Methods** *Example:* Eliminate books with unhappy endings.	1. **Include Specific Materials or Methods** *Example:* Include some books with unhappy endings to give a varied view of life.
2. **Are Essentially Negative** *Example:* Review your classroom library and eliminate books that include stereotypes.	2. **Are Essentially Affirmative** *Example:* Review your classroom library. If necessary, add books that portray groups in nonstereotypical ways.
3. **Intend to Control** *Example:* Do not accept *policeman.* Insist that students say and write *police officer.*	3. **Intend to Advise** *Example:* Encourage such nonlimiting alternatives for *policeman* as *police officer, officer of the law* or *law enforcer.*
4. **Seek to Indoctrinate, to Limit Access to Ideas and Information** *Example:* Drug abuse is a menace to students. Eliminate all books that portray drug abuse.	4. **Seek to Educate, to Increase Access to Ideas and Information** *Example:* Include at appropriate grade levels books that will help students understand the personal and social consequences of drug abuse.
5. **Look at Parts of a Work in Isolation** *Example:* Remove this book. The language includes profanity.	5. **See the Relationship of Parts to Each Other and to a Work as a Whole** *Example:* Determine whether the profanity is integral to portrayal of character and development of theme in the book.

IV. Practical Suggestions for Writing Professional Guidelines

Although the primary concern here is the distinction between censorial and advisory statements, other matters must be considered in the actual writing of guidelines. Writers need to:

1. *Respect the role of the English language arts teacher as a professional with broad knowledge of language, literature and cultural traditions.*

2. *Identify clearly the events and concerns that led to development of the particular set of guidelines.*

   This information might help the English language arts teacher in one school setting (rural, independent, suburban or urban) to understand the usefulness of guidelines developed elsewhere.

3. *Specify the professional objectives the guidelines are expected to reach.*

   Guidelines are less likely to have censorial effects if their content is closely linked to the purposes of English language arts instruction, to the function and philosophy of the school, to the particular student population, and to the aims of the curriculum as a whole.

4. *Write in plain English, providing clear, current definitions of professional terms as needed.*

5. *Respect the concerns and convictions of both external critics and professional colleagues who have opposing ideas about either principles or practices.*

   Guidelines are abstractions, and honest differences of opinion will exist about translating abstractions into concrete teaching and selection of materials.

6. *Build in procedures for review and revision.*

   Guidelines should make clear the date of adoption and the sponsoring group(s) and should provide for periodic review and revision. The teaching community is committed to continued research and study and to the dissemination of insights that prove to be valid and useful.

–Approved by the NCTE Board of Directors, 1982.

AN ENEMY OF CENSORSHIP: PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY
An Organization's Efforts to Free Secular Thought

by
Terry S. Haywood

> "Freedom to learn is the first necessity of guaranteeing that man himself shall be self-reliant enough to be free."
>
> --President Franklin D. Roosevelt
> June 30, 1938

Censorship is certainly not a new phenomenon. It has a long and extensive history. Its history reaches back to ancient times when censorship was an established body empowered to suppress and to ban, to burn and to destroy, to defy and to condemn, and ultimately, to restrict the freedom of thought and of speech. The **Analects** of Confucius were burned during the Ch'in dynasty (221-206 B.C.) in ancient China; Socrates fell prey to the Greek censors because his writings sordidly endangered the state; an **office of censor** was established in ancient Rome in 443 B.C., presumed to count and to classify inhabitants, but instead, restrictively regulated their morals; and during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, doctrinal and academic censors incessantly found fault with the great works of these periods.[1]

Censors of those eras often condemned liberal writings because they considered such bold expressions as impious, immoral, treasonable, or heretical. Sixteenth century censors placed their emphasis on heresy and subversion. Then too in this epoch, and well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, censors were appointed, as was the case in France in 1742, by political and intellectual directives as well as for their competence in specialized fields.[2] The evolution of censorship in the nineteenth century, however, was well-advanced, well-organized, political and presupposed, and consequently directed its wrath toward the regulation of morality and of science. These censors were often armed with unlimited powers to restrict freedom of thought and of speech.

Today, censorship still exists. Albeit more subtle, its rage is no less virulent. In the Soviet Union, for example, censorship is violently repressive, especially to enemies of the state, who are provided no freedom of speech or of the press. In the United States, censorship takes on a very different form. While it was once an organized authoritative body, it is now, for the most part, a pastime for parents, school administrators, school board members, religious and political right wing groups, whose fury is aimed at our public institutions and whose sole intent is to expel from public schools and public libraries, any information that is unacceptable to them and that does not fall within the confines of their conservative and narrow-minded views.

Although censorship has always been around, the attack on freedom to learn and public education has increased during the last three years because of an organized network of Radical Right groups which are seeking to christianize public education and to inject their religious views into American politics. PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY, a national nonprofit education organization has focused much time and energy in developing creative tools and resources to respond to this new breed of censors as they engage in a **battle for the minds.**[3]

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

In response to the massive onslaught on American public institutions by Moral Majority, Inc., Eagle Forum, Pro-Family Forum and other ultra-conservative right wing groups, PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY[4] was founded in 1980 by a group of distinguished individuals[5] whose purpose was to establish an organization that works to protect all Americans' individual rights and freedoms as embodied by the First Amendment and the rest of the Bill of Rights. It is guided and advised by a twenty-member board of directors that includes some of the nation's most respected religious, civic and educational leaders and is chaired by former Alabama Congressman John Buchanan. A nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational organization of over 100,000 members, its financial support depends heavily upon membership contributions and grants from private and charitable foundations. The national office is located in the nation's capital where there is ready access to the national legislature and the national press. In order to broaden, to expand, and to partake of its grassroots efforts, regional offices were established in California, New York, Ohio and Texas in 1982 and in North Carolina in 1983.

PEOPLE FOR's primary strategy has been to focus on public policy issues and to bring these issues into public arena for discussion and open debate. To realize this objective, it engages in three major program areas: mass media communication, citizen action and public education. These three programs combined have made significant progress in educating the American public on the dangerous activities of anti-democratic groups that threaten first amendment freedoms. Through its quarterly newsletter, the organization outlines program goals and activities, informs members and the public of current affairs, introduces new methods and strategies, and generates massive citizen action. Included in these issues also are a "censorship bulletin" that reports censorship challenges nationwide and special reports which focus on some specific public policy controversy--"hot items" such as evolution versus creationism in public schools, school prayer, religion and politics, or censorship. Examples of the latter are demonstrated in two excellent reports published in 1981 and 1982 respectively: "Mind Control in the Schools: The Censorship Battle" and "The Texas Connection: Countering the Textbook Censorship Crusade."[6]

Discussion papers are also published by PEOPLE FOR and utilized in its mass communication and educational efforts. These papers, written by individuals of sound academic standing and training, cover public policy areas related to first amendment freedoms. In 1983, for example, a discussion paper on censorship, written by Indiana University professor, Edward B. Jenkinson,[7] was published as the fourth in a series of discussion papers prepared for PEOPLE FOR. A most comprehensive citizen's guide to combatting censorship was also released in this year. **PROTECTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN: A CITIZEN'S GUIDE** is an information tool for schools, libraries, and citizens interested in minimizing the threat of censorship. It is an essential tool because it contains an overview of censorship, makes recommendations for preventing censorship, gives samples of materials distributed by the Radical Right, and suggests model textbook and library selection and reconsideration policies. This guide also examines the organizations behind censorship and anti-public education movements; documents the rise in censorship and explains why it is happening; gives examples of how censorship incidents unfold; describes the censor's strategies and tactics; and offers samples of the censors' most recent victories. PEOPLE FOR has also published **LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR SOME,** written by David Bollier. This book is in question and answer form and explores textbook and library censorship, the "pro-family" movement, the electronic church, creationism and " voluntary" school prayer and the witch hunt against "secular humanists."

In addition to its national publications, PEOPLE FOR has produced sixty seconds TV spots and a thirty minute TV documentary to inform the public on the freedom of expression and the threat to cherished rights and liberties. It also produced an award-winning dramatic and musical salute to American freedoms, "I LOVE LIBERTY" that was aired nationally on ABC. PEOPLE FOR's advertising campaign includes a magazine public service advertisement campaign, "CENSORSHIP IN A FREE SOCIETY; IT'S A BAD MATCH," that is still underway to increase public awareness of the impact of a national censorship movement.

PEOPLE FOR established the Speakers Bureau and the Freedom to Learn Project in order to increase its efforts at informing the American public. The former was implemented to provide speakers to community groups and other national organizations for important speeches, debates and interviews. The latter was provided as an organizational tool to halt censorship and to help citizens protect their rights to read, to learn and to think freely without interference from organized self-appointed censors.

THE FREEDOM TO LEARN PROJECT

A pluralistic democracy and censorship do not go hand in hand. They are as antonymous as are freedom and tyranny. "Our Freedom to Learn Project," writes the president of PEOPLE FOR, Anthony T. Podesta, "works across the country to preserve our public schools, to prevent censorship, and to prepare our young people for a life of thinking for themselves in a pluralistic democracy." Here lies the basis for the creation of PEOPLE FOR's Freedom to Learn Project--a program that has become one of the most effective and far-reaching vehicles in the battle against censorship.

On the national level, it has been very effective. Reaching all fifty states, the program has managed to seek out, to expose, and in many cases, to quell the threat of censorship. On the state level, the program has been equally effective--in New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas--uncovering and attacking censorship in public schools and in public libraries. "No citizen or group has the right to use its private absolutist standards of right and wrong," writes Steven Pico, one of the plaintiffs in the **Pico v. Island Trees** case, "to prescribe what ideas should be available to a free people.[8] Through its Freedom to Learn Project, PEOPLE FOR stands firmly behind this idea in its efforts to halt the perilous threat of censorship.

By 1983, a full-fledged censorship foray from the right, on our public schools and public libraries, was well underway. If ignored and left unchecked, the conferred liberties, cherished and bequeathed by our founding fathers, might have withered away. Imagine a pluralistic community without those **prized** freedoms and those "checks and balances" against government and Orwell's "Big Brothers." Imagine the phobia, the discomfiture, and the turmoil.

Thanks to PEOPLE FOR, an organized response to the attack by the Radical Right helps to preserve those freedoms cherished by all Americans. PEOPLE FOR launched an all-out national anti-censorship survey to discover to what extent censorship had infiltrated American communities and also to discover the extent of its effects. Originally published in 1983, updated and re-issued in 1984, this national study found that censorship had been attempted or had succeeded in all but two of the fifty united states--Hawaii and Michigan. The study then reported that censorship was widespread, pervasive and better organized than ever before. Nor was censorship confined to any particular geographic area or to either end of the political spectrum. It then compellingly warned that the urge to censor affects every race, color, creed, and nationality. The study thus reported that seventy percent of the censorship incidents were initiated by a parent or a school official. The reasons cited for those censorship attempts parrot objections consistently raised by Radical Right censorship groups. For example, in Church Hill, Tennessee, a local parent group was given birth by the assistance of Concerned Women for America.[9] The censorship activity of such groups smacks of fundamentally right wing indoctrination.

The censorship activities of these groups are aimed directly at America's public institutions. No school or library is safe. Any and all materials which do not fit their mode of thinking are certain to become designated targets. Curriculum materials--textbooks, library books, films, student publications, sex educational materials and many others--are especially favorable targets of the censors. Objections are also raised against classics and contemporary literature--such works as **Animal Farm, To Kill a Mockingbird, or Mother Goose Rhymes.** And the reasons cited all seem to be a common theme prevalent among Radical Right censors--"profanity," "demeaning," "inappropriate biblical references," "historically inaccurate," "too realistic," "too sexually explicit," etc. According to the study, such general rationalizations cast fear on teachers, librarians and school officials and coerce them to steer clear of anything other than "safe instructional materials." The study then concluded that censorship is still a very viable force in America and that there is, indubitably, a national censorship movement keeping watch over what public school students read as well as what they write, view, and think.

THE REGIONAL OFFICES

In 1983, the regional offices of PEOPLE FOR--in New York, North Carolina, and Ohio--conducted surveys[10] to discover to what extent censorship had occurred in their states, what material was under attack, and who the local censors were. The regional offices found that censorship attempts were as significantly towering locally as they were at the national level. North Carolina reported that one-fourth of the 2500 school personnel surveyed had experienced one or more censorship challenges. It also reported that the success rate in one hundred censorship incidents was fifty-five percent. The Ohio study found that twenty-five percent of its 237 public school superintendents had experienced censorship and in one hundred cases documented, forty-two percent were successful. Of the 230 school districts reporting in New York, twenty-two percent had been confronted with one or more censorship attempts. Forty-two percent of the documented cases in New York were successful.

Although the largest percentage of censorship challenges came from local individuals and organizations, the studies found that these local censors were in some way connected with, or inspired and encouraged by, nationally organized right wing censorship groups. In Ohio, for example, it was found that seventy-nine percent of the challengers were parents and that fifteen percent of those incidents were initiated by local groups and community residents not directly associated with the schools. The New York study revealed that approximately eighty percent of its challenges came from parents. The study also made clear that the greatest number of censorship attempts were initiated by individuals or organizations connected with a national

Radical Right censorship network.[11] In North Carolina, the study found a marked increase in censorship challenges and then went on to report that of its 2500 respondents, twenty-six percent had experienced censorship which had been clearly organized or inspired by statewide organizations such as Moral Majority.

Not only was censorship initiated from without the public school system, but from within also. According to these studies, it was clear that the negative effect of censorship almost always resulted in authoritarian self-appointment. A school administrator, board member, teacher or librarian admitted that at one time or another, they had removed a book, ripped out a page, blacked out particular lines or passages in a book, or restricted the use of a controversial book. North Carolina reported thirty-one percent of its respondents admitted self-censorship; Ohio reported only three percent; the New York study reported none but it did mention, however, that in a climate of fear self-censorship is likely to occur.

And why was there an urge to self-censor materials? The three studies agreeably responded that the most apparent reason was to avoid any potential controversy. So any materials--which made references to sex, "foul" language, drug use, "denigration" of marriage or religion, racism and sexism--in one way or the other, were censored. It is clear that censorship demands will continue to appear time and time again. Some means and resources must therefore be developed in order to deal with censorship when it surfaces in our diverse society and when it attacks our public schools and libraries. In order to help alleviate the complex problem of censorship, the New York, North Carolina, and Ohio studies made specific recommendations which will, it is hoped, help public schools and libraries to respond to the increasing censorship demands of the 1980s. Hence, the studies recommended that all school districts should adopt formal policies and procedures for selection of instructional materials and challenges to instructional materials before challenges arise; all teachers, librarians, and administrators should be informed, on a regular basis, of the policies governing academic freedom to learn; school boards and administrators should give teachers strong support in the area of academic freedom; school systems should provide in-service training for its personnel about anti-public education activities and about district policies and procedures; and teachers and school officials should abandon any practice of self-censorship to avoid controversy.

In addition to releasing the findings of these surveys and to further the efforts of making the American public more aware of the censorship threat, PEOPLE FOR joined with other organizations[12] in support of National Banned Books Week. This is a designated week in September to promote the awareness of the growing threat of censorship, book bannings, and book burnings. Since 1982, the Ohio office of PEOPLE FOR promotes Freedom to Learn Week in Ohio during National Banned Books Week. The Ohio office invites bookstores and libraries from across the state to join with it in having public displays which reflect the theme of "freedom to learn." It also solicits public proclamations from the governor and mayors of major cities in Ohio.[13] This year all participating bookstores and libraries were provided with a poster, a list of books banned in Ohio, a map showing the counties in which censorship attempts occurred, and buttons which state "I READ BANNED BOOKS." Press releases were issued to newspapers, radio and TV stations statewide. This strategy worked effectively and proved to be of enormous success. This success was attested to in the TV and radio interviews and talk shows which follow. They reflect the public concern and are a further testimony to the efforts of PEOPLE FOR in its battle against censorship.

THE TEXAS TEXTBOOK PROJECT

As the largest single purchaser of school texts, Texas has enjoyed a tremendous advantage in shaping the books made available for purchase in the other 49 states. Nowhere else in the nation was the censorship battle more intense than it was in this southwestern state. This was the home of Mel and Norma Gabler--the renowned and notorious founders of the Educational Research Analyst--unyieldingly devoted to removing "secular humanism" from texts and replacing it with "christian" and "pro-American" morals.[14] In november 1974, the Gablers challenged the Ginn 360 Reading Series and requested the Texas State Textbook Committee not to accept ten of the readers for grades seven and eight. They lodged 163 objections against the readers, of which 26 were honored by the Textbook Committee.[15] In 1977, they were able to force the Textbook Committee to remove "10 books, including the dictionaries with vulgar language and unreasonable definitions."[16] There is little question that the Gablers' influence on textbook selection and public education in Texas is an alarming reality.

This reality did not go unchallenged though. This was accomplished through PEOPLE FOR's Texas Textbook Project that works to counter the influence of Mel and Norma Gabler and their followers. This project monitored the state's textbook adoption hearing and pushed for reform of the textbook selection process. PEOPLE FOR's efforts opened this process that, for the first time, allowed citizens to respond to censors' attacks on texts considered for Texas schools. A bill to insure this method was introduced to the Texas senate. Before, only negative objections were allowed by Texas adoption procedures. PEOPLE FOR generated national media attention on Texas in its efforts to democratize the textbook selection process. **Time** magazine, **The Washington Post**, the **New York Times** and other newspapers recognized PEOPLE FOR's efforts in editorials, while other daily papers published op-ed pieces. Finally, PEOPLE FOR won repeal of a decade-old rule that severely limited the treatment of evolution in science texts and identified evolution "as only one of several explanations of the origins of humankind" and "as theory rather than fact". This rule was stricken down when the Texas Attorney General issued a counter-ruling. The Texas State Board of Education was at first reluctant to make the change until PEOPLE FOR generated massive media attention on Texas and threatened with the possibility of a lawsuit. The State Board of Education then adhered to the ruling. This was a decisive victory!

Although the battle is not yet over and there remains a lot of work to be done in democratizing Texas' textbook selection process, PEOPLE FOR continues to fight for first amendment guarantees in Texas as well as for the whole nation.

A FINAL WORD

In 1948 when George Orwell wrote his major classic, he must have enthralled the citizens of that year, for his prediction is becoming alarmingly apparent in 1984 as we are witnessing the Radical Right taking on the presumed role of "Big Brothers." PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY plays an important and instrumental role in the battle to protect the freedom to learn. It is crystal clear that the impact of this national organization is far-reaching and that its accomplishments have been and will continue to be fruitful in preserving and protecting those freedoms and liberties guaranteed by the fundamental law of the land.

Utilizing its citizen action programs, PEOPLE FOR has generated community support for schools and libraries battling against censorship attacks. Utilizing its communication strategies, PEOPLE FOR has brought important issues to the forefront for examination, discussion and open debate. The response to community problems and critical issues has always grown from the notion that America is a free, tolerant, pluralistic and political community, in which its citizens are guaranteed liberties enjoyed only in a diverse, harmonious and working democracy--the political legacy handed down by our ancestors.

The attempt by the Radical Right to undermine that political legacy was responded to when PEOPLE FOR launched its massive programs of strategy, education, communication and citizen action. When the Radical Right began its ponderous program of censorship to indoctrinate, PEOPLE FOR retorted with a massive campaign aimed at educating the American public about this censorship jeopardy. When the Radical Right infiltrated America's innocent communities and expropriated from citizens their right to free thinking, PEOPLE FOR sparked a national anti-censorship campaign to identify the censors and to expose them to America as a perilous menace to pluralistic democracy. When our public schools and libraries were in peril of yielding to the Radical Right, PEOPLE FOR launched its Freedom to Learn Project to defend, to defy, and to destroy any efforts to subjugate the nation's youths. When in Texas the Radical Right decided which textbooks were appropriate and acceptable for the nation, PEOPLE FOR fought for the minds, educated the public, initiated citizen action, and confronted the censors with tenacious intensity in the defense of American liberties. And when the Jerry Falwells, the Phyllis Schlaflys, and Mel Gablers appeared on the scene in order to usurp citizens' rights and liberties, PEOPLE FOR was there likewise to protect those prized freedoms cherished by all Americans.

When teachers, librarians, and other school personnel are faced with censorship challenges, PEOPLE FOR is available to help and to assist when the need arises. Like the frightened, inexperienced, and struggling colonials, who in 1776, fought to free the American colonies from their British tyrants--PEOPLE FOR fights today to preserve American liberties. No small wonder that the respected **Christian Science Monitor** said PEOPLE FOR "invests the love of freedom, liberty and the flag symbol itself with a kind of natural and refreshing sophistication in which all Americans can join unashamedly." And in unison, the **Washington post** sallied: "It is the political diversity of America, past and present, the range of competing ideas, which (Norman) Lear and his associates are celebrating." In 1980, when Norman Lear and his distinguished assemblage sat down to give life to an organization that protects all Americans' rights, liberties, and freedoms, they did it together as a **PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY.**

NOTES

[1] "Censorship," **Encyclopedia Britannica,**

[2] Ibid.

[3] This term was coined by Rev. Tim LaHaye, Radical Right author of **The Battle for the Mind** (1980) and national board member of the Moral Majority, Inc.

[4] Hereinafter cited as PEOPLE FOR.

[5] The founding members of PEOPLE FOR include: Andrew Heiskell, former chairman of Time, Inc. and chairman of the New York Public Library; TV writer-producer Norman Lear; former Congresswoman Barbara Jordan; and Rev. Dr. Charles Bergstrom, Executive Director, office of Government Affairs, the Lutheran Council.

[6] These two reports were published in PEOPLE FOR's **Quarterly Newsletter** in October 1981 and July 1982 respectively.

[7] Edward B. Jenkinson, **The Tale of Tell City: An Anti-Censorship Saga** (Washington, D.C.: People for the American Way, 1983).

[8] In 1982, the Supreme Court in **Pico v. Island Trees,** dealt with the issue of censorship, but in a very narrow way. The Court acknowledge the limited right of students to oppose efforts to **remove** books from school **libraries,** but even in this limited area failed to agree on a standard protecting students' right to receive information. One result of the case was to leave the initial decision of what is--or is not--"educationally suitable" in the hands of local communities.

[9] Concerned Women for America (CWA) is a national women's Radical Right group opposed to the National Organization of Women, Planned Parenthood and the League of Women's Voters. This group operates through a network of churches and ultrafundamentalist groups and focuses on "moral reform" and "pro-family" issues. See David Bollier, **LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR SOME** (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1982). Its president is Beverly LaHaye, wife of Rev. Tim LaHaye.

[10] The three censorship studies conducted by PEOPLE FOR's regional offices were: **Attacks on the Freedom to Learn: New York (1980-1983); Defending the Freedom to Learn: Combatting Censorship in North Carolina's Schools"** and **Attacks on Freedom to Learn: Ohio (1980-1983).** The former two were published in November 1983; the latter in May 1984.

[11] According to David Bollier, see note 9, the Radical Right are "people of an extensive national, state, and local network of groups who seek to 'reform' America to conform with their religious and political values." For futher listing of Radical Right groups and who they are, also refer to this source.

[12] These other organizations sponsoring the freedom to learn are the American Booksellers Association, the American Library Association, the National Association of College Stores, the Association of American Publishers, and the American Society of Journalists and Authors.

[13] This year and for the last two, the Ohio office has secured a proclamation from Governor Richard Celeste of Ohio, designating a week in September "Freedom to Learn Week"; and for the first time this year, proclamations from the mayors of Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus.

[14] See Edward B. Jenkinson, "How the Mel Gablers Have Textbooks on Trial" in Davis, ed., **Dealing With Censorship** 8Illinois: National Council of Teachers, 1979) p. 108.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Quoted in ibid, p. 111.

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THE SILENT CENSOR

by
T. J. RAY

A confessional might be a more fitting locale for what I have to say if we had academic confessionals. A scholarly meeting is perhaps an inappropriate occasion to say these things. And yet, there is a nexus that brings the two points together. Perhaps we as academicians should take the time to examine what we have done and in appropriate ways confess our shortcomings, even though we cannot perhaps atone for them.

Great concern arises from time to time about censorship around the land. This or that group takes it in its head to sanitize the written page and filter the microphone. A radically liberal group might challenge the Beatitudes while a wildly conservative group might challenge the Constitution itself. Church groups, civic groups, parent-teacher groups, and political groups hone their axes and set out to bludgeon this or that publication. Rarely do such factions appeal to sweet reason; more often than not they simply hold their axes aloft as a threat. They don't say, "Do what we want because....."Instead, they shout, "Do what we want, or else...." The "or else" here is the volatile part of the process. It may take the form of job dismissal or a fire-bombing. It may result in great bonfires of printed matter, bonfires similar to those in Germany in the 30's and 40's. The intent is simplicity (and simplemindedness) itself: if you burn the document, the ideas will disappear. Such is the warning of Ray Bradbury's Farenheit 451 and Orwell's 1984. It is, in a better world, a false premise. Unfortunately, in this world ideas do sometimes die simply because no one articulates them.

My purpose here is not to cast stones at groups that exert subtle or violent pressure on speakers and writers. My confession is personal, and I hope no one else shares my guilt. I confess to self-censorship, the most difficult to expose and eradicate. Perhaps an illustration of my sin will serve the moment.

In 1961 a new instructor joined the Department of English at the Inter-American University in San German, Puerto Rico. He held a week-old M.A. degree from a Baptist college in Mississippi, the state in which he had grown up. He came from a state which, while racially mixed, was not institutionally integrated. He came to a state which, while institutionally integrated, was not socially integrated. The question of race had not been high on his agenda for meditation. No color problems existed until it was announced that on a certain Sunday afternoon a notable speaker would visit the campus, a speaker of international renown. That speaker was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Now by this time it was well known that the new instructor was from Mississippi. His moment of truth developed out of the coincidence of two dates: on Sunday the great civil rights leader was to speak and on Monday the hapless instructor was to begin a study of Huckleberry Finn in his American literature class. Much of that week-end was consumed by the anxiety produced by this coincidence. How could a young man brought up in the deep South teach Twain's great novel and avoid racial difficulties? How would he dare to speak of Nigger Jim less than twenty-four hours after the Reverend King had spoken? How could he change his syllabus to avoid the whole issue?

For fifteen minutes on that bright Caribbean Monday the class heard a rather vague discussion of Huck and his travels. Then a very dark Nigerian in the front row asked a perfectly straightforward question, tossing it out like a hand grenade: How do people in Mississippi treat Negroes? You could have heard the molecules in the head of a pin colliding at that moment had it not been for the blood pounding so loudly in the instructor's brain. For perhaps the first time in his twenty-three year existence he was being asked to say something that people would really hear, might agree or disagree with, might applaud or hiss. The decision was fairly quickly made, and the remainder of that class period saw a free discussion of Southern racial attitudes. Later, when the adrenalin had stopped pumping, the truth became clear: Mark Twain had said most of what there was to say about racial intolerance and abuse. How could there have been any reluctance to teach Twain? Here had been a golden opportunity to explore a masterpiece with students for whom its truths were very contemporary and relevant. But there had been that terrible fifteen minutes of hiding from truth.

By coincidence that same instructor was teaching at a state university in Mississippi when the University of Mississippi was integrated. As luck or fate would have it, he was teaching Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" when the rioting took place in Oxford. His students were, as was the case in those days, all white. Again there was the anxiety and hesitancy about dealing with the issues of the assignment for fear they would become entangled with the passions of the day. But now the teaching went on despite the scrawled "Nigger lover" on the blackboard at the next class.

Self-censorship exerts itself on many fronts, particularly when strong views that are significant to minority groups are involved. For instance, must we really expurgate all of literature to rid ourselves of the indefinite third person singular pronoun? Must we commit one grammatical error in order to right a perceived social error? Must we pretend that Little Sambo was green instead of black? Must Chaucer be edited to satisfy the Southern Baptist Convention? Years ago, some people with blue pencil in hand in Mississippi suggested that students read Shakespeare because his language was acceptable. Had they not read Titus Andronicus? Did they not consider gang rape and the other atrocities of that play obscene? Are we to ignore Milton's observation in "Areopagitica" that it may be better for young people to learn some things through reading rather than experience?

For many years I have taught classes in the history of the language and various grammatical systems. Along the way I have done a good stint at semantics. Early on I discovered that there might be a problem in discussing dialects in integrated classes, particularly if the class was integrated and composed of public school teachers. It bothered me to tell white teachers that they were almost willfully making a wrong linguistic approach to their black students. It also bothered me that a discussion of non-standard dialects might offend the black teachers in my classes. But I concluded that it was absolutely necessary to discuss the absence of the plural morpheme and the non-standard use of the verb "be" and the impact of cultural context in language mastery if I was to be honest with my subject or my students. The same constraint holds in semantics classes. The only way to discuss such matters as taboo words is to discuss them, and that means naming them. There is no room for squeamishness in teaching.

One last front of self-censorship should be noted. I recall quite vividly the day the English department at a great university in Texas approved its first black literature course. Great debate of small sense marked the day; in the absence of reason and careful deliberation there was diatribe from both sides. It was not an argument as to whether the course and its content should exist because fine writing would be explored therein. No, the argument centered on the right of students to study the literary heritage of this country. To speak against the course on its literary merits was to cast one's lot with the white bigots--or so I was told. Much the same kind of debate has occurred many times since them when text committees have chosen this or that text. Quite often the decision pivots on the matter of minority representation in a given book. The issue here is not whether minority cultural artifacts should be studied or not. The issue is whether a given piece of writing is art primarily because it was produced by a black, a woman, or a native American and hence proper material for a literature course as opposed to a sociology or cultural exploration course.

Of course, literature classes are not the only ones affected by outside influences. Consider the history professor who is intimidated about how he presents various events. What should he do when given a textbook with a biased view of the past, say, for example, the South before and during the Civil War? If he is in the South, he may feel an obligation to a constituency that wants to believe that slaves were well treated; he may not be concerned about another view of that period that argues simply that to presume to own people was a barbarity in its own right. Consider also the dilemma of the science teacher who may strongly feel that students should be taught the theory of evolution but hesitates to do so because the only safe way to do so is to also give the Genesis theory equal time. Should he take the safest path and mention neither? Are teachers to be compelled to reshape history to conform to contemporary views? Is this not how history gets rewritten in various repressive countries?

There is no end to this confession because further opportunities to err continue to offer themselves, more factions appear to take offense at what we teach. Should gay literature be taught? Should writing that reflects pacificist thinking be required? If pacificist thoughts are to be presented, is it incumbent on the teacher to give equal time to airing pro-nuclear positions? Should literature that pleases the fundamentalist preachers be mandatory in school curricula? And, be it noted, people with fundamental beliefs of all strains are to be found producing written announcements of their beliefs. Are teachers finally to ignore all issues for which ethical aspects can be enunciated? Should literature professors purge the writing of authors such as Ernest Hemingway because it is said to be "masculine" oriented rather than offend staunch advocates of women's rights? Will we in time be forced to generate courses in "gray lit" to deal with the concerns of older citizens? Must any writing that tacitly approves or disapproves of abortion be banned? Are stores, plays, or poems that hint at the reality of suicide be eradicated lest such writing precipitate a mass lemming leap from high buildings? Is there ultimately going to be anything left to discuss in the classroom other than mathematical or chemical subjects? Is it, finally, even safe to suggest that self-censorship is wrong? Wrong or not, it is often the safest course for the anxious teacher to follow.

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REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING ENGLISH: AN INTERVIEW WITH MARTHA COTTRILL

by
Sharon Patrick

Martha Cottrill, a life-long resident of Chillicothe, Ohio, retired in 1980 from an approximately forty year teaching career. After graduating from Ohio University, she first taught in a rural Ross County high school, but she continued her teaching of social studies and English in the city of Chillicothe at both the junior and senior high levels until her retirement. During her career she was instrumental in changing conditions for female teachers in the Chillicothe city schools. She was an advocate of SOCTE and NCTE. In 1983 Miss Cottrill was given an Educator Emeritus Award by the Chillicothe Education Association for her outstanding contributions as a teacher. She was also very influential in the founding of the Scioto-Paint Valley Mental Health Board, which she considers to be a major accomplishment. For enjoyment she loves to read and play bridge. Of her career she says that she enjoyed teaching, living by her belief that teaching and learning must be fun. Recently Miss Cottrill talked about her career as an English teacher. The comments that follow are not an interview per se but reflections on some of the critical issues facing teachers of English today.

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Television has had such a tremendous impact on our lives. Many people who take it for granted, as most of us do, don't realize the difference it has made in our lives and in our schools. Since the advent of television after World War II and until the public bought televisions in the 1950's, what did we do in the English classroom? For one thing, we did grammar. We began about the third or fourth grade and taught nouns and verbs; the next year nouns, verbs, and adjectives; and so forth. We taught grammar every year. Even in high school we taught grammar, perhaps just as review, but eventually with the college bound students we taught advanced grammar, covering, for example, objective complements and retained objects.

Now people are talking about back to basics and excellence in education, but they are really not talking about grammar, if you define it narrowly. What these people are talking about is spelling, punctuation, and agreement. What they are actually concerned about is the realistic part of grammar--what they remember from school. You hear people say, "They don't teach no grammar no more." People want schools to teach grammar as they did forty years ago, grammar year in and year out.

Forty years ago textbooks once in a while might be innovative (which, by the way, is a word that was never used in education then) enough to begin with verbs instead of nouns, but most of the time books began with nouns, and every year was the same. For many students the books were unduly repetitious. I understood that many of my students turned it off eventually. It came to a point when we educators said at the end of high school that students did not know their grammar, except for a few, in spite of the fact that we had covered it over and over again. Now this situation is back with us, and it gives me a sense of deja vu. I've been through this before, but I'm not cynical. I think it will get better.

One of the things that I considered important in the study of grammar is the elimination of a certain snobbishness about grammar. We want our students to learn what we call standard grammar because we feel it will help them in their careers and lives, but I feel this isn't a moral issue. A person with poor grammar is still a person. Frankly, I always told my students not to put somebody down, not to think less of someone whose grammar is not considered correct because some of the biggest crooks and confidence people in the world use good grammar. I have known teachers who considered grammar a moral thing; it is not that important. I didn't say this to my students, but I used to say to people who talked about the English teacher saying, "Oh, I must watch my grammar. You are an English teacher," that if I had to be cast away on a desert island for the rest of my life, the grammar he used would not be important to me. Grammar would be way down on the list. Everyone always understood the he.

What else did we do then besides grammar? We read. In elementary grades we read stories and wrote little paragraphs and essays; then in high school we read the traditional books. I never taught Silas Marner, but so many people have made negative comments about it. I am convinced that a good teacher could teach Silas Marner to anyone but the most reluctant reader. It is a question of how to begin, the background, and how to motivate the students. If necessary you have to be a little bit of a ham. I'm not suggesting that we go back to the more traditional literature, but at the same time, I can't help questioning the quality of literature today. For example, when you read in a book catalog a description of a book for young adults entitled It's About Stephie, you question the quality. "A fourteen year old run-away meets an attractive man the night she runs away to New York City. The favorite is a pimp who wants to win Stephie's love and trust so she will work for him. He succeeds, and in two weeks Stephie is trapped in a web of dependency, willing to do anything for his favor and love." Now this is a book that could be used as a young adult novel in the classroom or recommended for supplementary reading. How different from an incident when I was teaching Tess of the D'urbervilles, and one of the boys said, "Will you explain something about this. Here is Tess back home with her baby. When did this all happen?" Some of the other students, mostly girls, immediately responded, "Oh, I can tell you. I read back and found it." They could not find these details easily in the book. The modern novel goes into very graphic, vivid detail, but my students liked Tess. They didn't have to have all of the details.

This brings me to one of the issues that I do get very disturbed about and that is the literature for our schools and the idea of censorship. I believe very firmly that teachers should use good judgement and good taste in determining what books and stories they will teach, but I get very upset when I realize that some people have enough influence to prevent teachers from teaching such things as "The Devil and Daniel Webster" (and this is to me one of our great American short stories) or Brave New World or even some of Shakespeare. I am very concerned about the power some people have to determine what is in our textbooks and our reading books. I feel that English teachers, in particular, must first use good judgement, but beyond that we must insist that people know what censors want to cut.

Reading is one of the most important things we do. It doesn't all have to be fun. It doesn't all have to be relevant. Imagination is a wonderful thing. I remember when I was teaching junior high school social studies to a class that today would be considered EMR. They could no more read the textbook than they could read Greek. I read aloud to them every Friday. I did this with many groups over the years, but I discovered that this class liked Fairy Stories in particular. Many of the big boys that you would expect to want horror stories loved fairy stories, asking me to read some over and over again. At the end of the year, I said, "How about you telling me some of these stories." One boy who could not have read the story gave almost verbatim a fairy story. Now with the modern emphasis in reading, I think a special reading class could have taught this boy to read because he had to have some ability to remember so exactly.

Often when I read to students, I explained words or substituted words. One story was about a King who was bored and unhappy, and one morning he refused to eat his porridge.(I substituted bread and milk.) That day he went out into the Kingdom, and he found people who needed help, so he helped them. He felt much better and that evening he ate his bread and milk with relish. Immediately the students uttered, "I don't think I would like relish with bread and milk!"

Two of my favorite stories that no one should get through school without reading are "The Happy Prince" and "The Selfish Giant" by Oscar Wilde. Unfortunately there are even some censors who object to reading fairy stories in the classroom. We have to be on our guard constantly. After I retired I thought perhaps I was unduly concerned about censorship, but from what I continue to read, I do believe we need to be concerned about the censor.

We moved along blithely through the years until Sputnik. It did make a difference in our schools. Then came the age of rebellion with experiments and innovations. We discovered linguistics along with structural and transformational grammar. Some teachers had success with these in the classroom, but I felt much of it wasn't for high school students; it was just too much. We now decided that students must read those books which were relevant to them. We moved away from stereotypes, and this step was very important, but as usually happens, we over reacted. We sometimes chose inappropriate books, and often we were pressured to choose inappropriate literature for our students.

As for composition, I found over the years that I didn't know any of the answers to teaching writing. I did persuade my students not to use offensive language. Sometimes my students pointed out that offensive language is the way it is. My response was that trash cans are the way it is, but I don't live in them. I urged my students to be creative, to find alternate ways to express themselves in words. I also spurred them to be original in content as well.

I have never been able to teach composition and not grade the papers. I have attended innumerable workshops on grading compositions, but I did find that peer tutoring and peer editing were most helpful. I was, however, always impelled to read each paper, make appropriate marks, and conclude with some sort of evaluation. Of course, one of the hardest things in the world is to write a good evaluation, and the better the writing, the more difficult the task. It was dudgery at times, but I found satisfaction in it. I also found it necessary to set standards for composition, especially for juniors and seniors, and to expect students to meet the standards. Often my students objected to my high standards, and they resented criticism, at first. As time went by, the students learned to accept criticism and in many cases rose to the standards. In composition classes I also attempted to awaken in my students a love of our language. I so much enjoy words: working with them, studying them, reading about them, using them. An English teacher must enjoy language and spark in students an interest in the English language.

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As Miss Cottrill reflected on her years in the profession, she shared a humorous definition of an English teacher as someone who likes poetry, who can use a semicolon correctly, and who knows the difference between its and it's. Her comments on her career show clearly that being an English teacher is indeed complicated. In her conversation, she discussed many of the critical and complicated issues facing English teachers today: grammar, reading, literature, censorship, composition, and language. Miss Cottrill also looked to the future of the profession as well. She predicts that the influence of television on our students will become even greater and more evident. She warns of censorship's threat to literature. She also urges teachers to re-evaluate literature selections, and emphasizes that all reading material does not have to be "relevant." She hopes schools will emphasize more speech skills in the English curriculum. Finally, she expresses her belief that the actual processes of teaching and learning should be fun if they are to be effective. Miss Cottrill concluded her reflections by quoting Samuel Johnson: "Human experience, while constantly contradicting theory, is the greatest test of truth."

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THE CUMULATIVE SENTENCE: A BETTER WAY

by
R. E. Stratton

Ron Luce (in "Sentence Combining and Composition Teachers," Focus, Spring '84) identifies "grammar-based pedagogy" as a weakness of this technique, and I find myself very much in agreement with him. In addition, this particular method of generating composition seems to me to promote a certain clever facility in dealing with a number of ideas, while neglecting to provide students with a heuristic for thinking, the very want so beautifully supplied by the cumulative sentence, central to the work of the late Francis Christensen (in, e.g., A New Rhetoric). As a matter of fact, two authors in Professor Luce's helpful bibliography, William Strong and William Stull, have recently updated parts of Christensen's scholarship, as has Jim Gray of the Bay Area Writing Project.

Yet even the cumulative (called "loose" by almost all of our current-traditional handbooks) sentence relies upon a grammar-based pedagogy. My friend, Les Whipp, of the University of Nebraska (Lincoln) claims we ought to be able to teach the notion of moving in ever closer in our thinking and hence our writing without requiring such terms, but in practice I have not found this possible--not for long, anyway. So the types of free modification added, the position of completed and incompleted action, and even the numbering of sentence levels continue to make themselves most accessible through the jargon of a Latinate grammar, in this instance not such a bad thing, either, since the gains supplied by viewing sentences, paragraphs, and even longer units of writing as models for thinking balance the bothersome pedagogy: I am willing to teach some grammar, then, if I see reasons for it. And when the grammar and the sense coordinate so effectively, then I am convinced that in Professor Luce's phraseology, the cumulative model "could be a valuable part of a very powerful teaching pedagogy." Perhaps even more so than sentence combining. For some case work, interested readers might investigate "The Camera Eye and Two Freshman Writers" (Arizona English Bulletin, Spring/Summer '84, by David Sosnowski and R. E. Stratton), I ever-so-modestly suggest.

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